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THE SOURCES OF ISLAM

BY THE

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C.M.S. Missionary from Jufsa

AUTHOR OF "THE RELIGION OF THE CRESCENT" ETC.

TRANSLATED AND ABRIDGED BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

As an Introduction to the Sources of Islam, the Translator prefixes an outline of the work from that valuable Review, the *Nineteenth Century*, December 1900.

THE SOURCES OF ISLAM.

THIS remarkable book has been written by the Rev. W. St Clair-Tisdall, Missionary, C.M.S., Julfa, Persia. It takes up a subject never as yet brought properly under discussion either by Mahometans or Christians —namely, the origin of the Coran, and the Sources from which both it and Tradition have been derived. By the teaching of Mahomet the Coran is of divine origin, and was brought down, as Tradition tells us, word by word by Gabriel to the Prophet's ear. The original is “written on a Tablet, kept in Heaven,”¹ “sent down on the night of al Cadr”² by the Almighty. Thus the Coran comes from God alone, heavenly, divine, and uncreate from all eternity. Now if it be shown that much of this grand book can be traced to human Sources existing daily around the Prophet, then Islam falls to the ground. And this is what the Author proves with marvellous power and erudition.

Such Sources as were derived from the Arabs them-

¹ Surah lxxxv. 21; vi. 19.

² S. xcvi. 1. Sent down, then, as they say, to the lowest Heaven, and thence by Gabriel communicated to the Prophet, bit by bit, as occasion required.

selves are treated first (chap. ii.). The shadow of divine unity still subsisted among them. There were a multitude of gods and idols, of which each tribe had its special ones, as Lât and Ozza for the Coreish. The intercession of these was sought ; but above and beyond them all was the ancient memory of one great God, Allah —the *Al* (“the”) a proof of sovereign unity. Curious that the word occurs in the Prophet’s family, his father and uncle being called Abdallah and Obeidallah. There was thus a local Source to build upon. Then we have the multitude of national habits and practices, as the Hajj, the Kaaba, etc., maintained in the new faith, though all of earthly origin. It was indeed the Prophet’s endeavour to pull down all purely idolatrous worship;¹ and so he did, except the kissing of the Black stone, too popular a practice to be abandoned. A curious example of a purely local Source may be found in a number of verses of the Coran which are shown to be taken from the Moallaqât, a plagiarism rather difficult for the Moslem to conjoin with the heavenly origin of his Revelation.

Chapter iii. explains the influence of Judæism. And first we are told that the Five times of prayer were borrowed from the Sabaeans. The Jews were numerous and powerful throughout Arabia, and Mahomet, having sought their conversion in vain, at last fought against them and banished them from the country. But in the meantime he had taken much of his teaching from their books, the Talmud, their Commentaries, etc. The

¹ “What think ye of Allat and Al Uzza and Monât, the other third ? . . . They are but empty names which ye and your fathers have named Goddesses.” S. liii. 19.

first Qibla was Jerusalem, and the marvellous tales thus derived cannot be read without astonishment. Thus there is the story of Cain and Abel, and of their parents weeping while the raven showed how to bury the dead ; Abraham cast by Nimrod into the fire unhurt;¹ the Queen of Sheba uncovering her legs as she walked before Solomon over the glass floor, which she takes for a sheet of water ; the descent of Hârut and Mârut and other spirits from above to tempt mankind ; Sammâel the Angel of Death speaking out of the Golden Calf—and other fictitious tales too numerous to mention. It is strange that though the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are spoken of throughout the Coran with the utmost devotion, only one passage is quoted from them, namely, “The meek shall inherit the earth.” In respect also of the Tables of the Testimony put by Moses into the Ark, the Moslems, following the extravagant notions of the Jews who fancied that all their sacred books with the Talmud were also in the Ark, place on the “Preserved Table” their own Coran ! A vast emerald mountain has also arisen out of the word *Cau* in the Talmudic explanation of *Thohu*, Genesis i. 2 ; of which it takes 2000 years to make the circuit, and 500 the ascent. Such are the wild vagaries of Moslem tradition and the Sources whence they come.

Chapter iv. next shows the apocryphal Christian sources from which Islam has so largely borrowed. There were many Christian tribes in Arabia belonging to heretical sects who had sought refuge

¹ The story arises out of the strange mistake of UR of the Chaldees (Gen. xv. 7) for the same word signifying an oven or fire.

there from persecution in Roman lands. Little versed in their own Scriptures, they spent the time in imaginary and childish fables. The Prophet, longing for a universal faith, listened gladly to such stories, which thus became the Source of much we find in the Coran.

First we have the fairy tale of the Cave wherein the seven Sleepers slumbered for ages, fearing persecution.¹ Next we have endless stories of the Virgin Mary, both in the Coran and with vast detail also in Tradition; her mother Hannah, her childhood as fed by angels in the Temple; Joseph chosen by a miraculous rod, etc., much as in the Proto-Evangelium and other Egyptian and Coptic writings.² Then there are the tales of Jesus, as of his speaking in the cradle, breathing life into birds of clay, etc.³ These the Prophet learned probably from Mary his Coptic concubine, as they are all contained in such Coptic books as the Gospel of St. Thomas.⁴ Thus we have the descent of the Table from Heaven (derived no doubt from the table of the Lord's Supper); the promise by Jesus of a prophet to come, called Ahmed,⁵ which was apparently caused by the mistake of $\pi\epsilon\rho\kappa\lambda\nu\tau\delta\varsigma$ for $\pi\alpha\rho\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\sigma\varsigma$: the notion that the resemblance only, and not the real person, of Christ was slain,⁶ derived from the heretic Basilides, etc. Passing over much of interest, we may close our

¹ It is worth the while of anyone not familiar with the Coran to read this at length, as given in Surah xviii. 8-24.

² Aaron's sister Maryam is curiously confused with Mary of the Gospel.

³ S. iii. 41; v. 19.

⁵ S. lxi. 6.

⁴ S. v. 121.

⁶ S. iv. 156.

review of Christian sources by notice of the *Balance*, briefly mentioned in the Coran,¹ but surrounded by a vast variety of Coptic tales. Two Egyptian books (one of ancient date placed in the tombs to be read by the dead) are quoted at length; a wonderful Egyptian picture exhibits how the Balance weighs the spirits, good and bad; and strange sights are given of Adam and Abraham in the Heavens beyond.

Chapter v. relates many things from ancient Zoroastrian and even Hindoo writings. Persia, far ahead of Arabia, had a sensible influence upon it, and much of what is Oriental in the Coran and Tradition is evidently derived from Pehlavi and other Eastern sources. Thus we have the marvels of the Seven heavens, seen by the Prophet on his ascent from Jerusalem; the Houries; Azâzil and other spirits coming up from Hades; the Light of Mahomet, the bridge of Sirât, etc.—all illustrated by the author's marvellous knowledge of Eastern literature, beliefs, and history. The Prophet must have learned all these things from the foreigners who frequented Medina. Suspected of this, he indignantly replied that his tongue was not foreign, but pure Arabic alone.²

The concluding chapter tells us of a few inquirers in Arabia, called Hanefites, just before the time of Mahomet. There were four at Mecca, of whom one became a Christian, another a Moslem, and a third joined

¹ S. xlvi. 16; ci. 5 and 6: “He whose balance is heavy shall live in pleasure; but whose balance is light, his dwelling-place shall be hell fire.”

² S. xvi. 103: “They say a certain man teacheth him; but the tongue of him whom they mention is foreign, while this is simple Arabic”—hardly an answer in point!

Cæsar. The fourth, Waraca, was first a Jew and then a Christian. One of these, a pious devotee, worshipped yearly in a cave near Mecca, and no doubt influenced the Prophet, who used to visit the same place for quiet and lonely contemplation.

The Sources of Islam, our Author in conclusion shows, have been altogether human and misleading. They all passed through the Prophet's mind as he composed the Coran, which thus bears throughout the impress of his own heart and character. One good thing there is in it, namely, a thorough testimony to the Gospel and "Tourât"; all true Moslems are accordingly invited to study both, and thus through our Saviour Christ obtain the true promises of their father Abraham.

The *Sources* is a noble work, and reflects high distinction on the writer. Hitherto much labour has been spent in showing the falsity and errors of Islam, as has been ably done by Pfander and others. It has remained for our Author not only to conceive a new, and perhaps more thorough and effective, mode of treating the so-called divine and eternal faith, but also in doing so to prove its Sources to be of purely human origin; and that in so masterly and effective a way that it seems impossible for good Moslems to resist the conclusion drawn. And for all this the thanks of the Christian world are eminently due to the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall.

W. MUIR.

TRANSLATIONS

RECOMMENDED BY

SIR W. MUIR.

IT appears to me of great importance that the *Sources of Islam* should be translated into Arabic, Urdu, and other languages of the East, and so made accessible to Moslem readers everywhere.

The Persian volume, of which the present forms but a partial and compressed translation, is remarkable for giving, *in their primitive tongues*, all the Authorities quoted by our Author, which are then followed by translations into Persian. Where the passages are in Arabic or other language *understood at the present time*, it will no doubt be proper in any new Editions to continue printing them as they stand, with a translation into the common tongue of the country for which the edition is intended. But where they consist of quotations from primitive tongues (as Pehlavi, etc.) not now in use, the *originals* should I think be left out, and simply the translation given as above proposed. The great antiquity of some of the evidence which Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall has given in its

ancient form, is no doubt a remarkable proof that certain of the Sources of Islam have descended from time immemorial ; and it may also be thankfully added, of the wonderful learning and research of the Author. But in all new Editions and Translations these antique passages should I think be omitted in their original tongue, and the rendering alone given in the language of the day.¹

The Church Mission is to be congratulated on this memorable treatise—bringing as it does so wonderfully to light, the earthly Sources of the Coran, in contradistinction to the Moslem belief in its heavenly and eternal origin ; and, in a very special manner, on its having come from the hands of one of their own distinguished Missionaries. And the hope may be warmly expressed that the work will be widely distributed throughout the East, and lead many an earnest Reader in Moslem lands, to the faith of his Father Abraham, and the living Sources of the Gospel of our Saviour.

W. M.

¹ I learn, however, from the Author that he is not of this opinion, but thinks that the originals, in whatever language, ancient or difficult to decipher and understand, should be printed in full, as otherwise the Orientalist will suspect the translation as an invention of the Author ; or if not in the text of the Work, they might, he thinks, be lithographed and placed at the end of the volume.

THE SOURCES
OF ISLAM.

INTRODUCTION.

SINCE every religion must have had a Source from which it sprung, so this last faith, Islam, must like all others have had its originating cause. Accepted neither by Jews nor Christians, many treatises have been written to controvert it. These have been answered by Moslems in such works as the *Mizdn ool Mavazin*; but unfortunately the learning of the Authors of these defences of Islam has not been equal to their zeal. The object of the present work is to investigate the various theories which have been put forward as to the origin of Islam. The Author first states briefly the Moslem view, and then examines the claim of those who hold that Islam has a human and not a divine origin.

In this new endeavour, it has been the Author's object, by God's help, to shew from whence the Moslem faith has risen, its foundation and origin, in other words, its Source. And he trusts that those who study the following pages, having learned the origin of the Faith, may not lose sight of those Sources whence has arisen the vast stream which has overflowed so many nations of the East.

CHAPTER I.

VIEWS OF MOSLEM DIVINES AS TO THE SOURCES FROM WHICH ISLAM SPRANG.

MOSLEMS hold that their Faith came direct from heaven. The Coran and all their tenets were sent down by Gabriel from God himself to Mahomet. Much of their faith is also built upon *Tradition* handed down by the Prophet's followers. But the Shieahs differ from the Sunnies as to much that is told us by Tradition; and the Author, therefore, has based his arguments mainly on the Coran which is accepted as divine by every Moslem, and on such tradition as is conformable thereto. As for the Coran, it is held to be of eternal origin, recorded in heaven, and lying as it does there upon the "Preserved Table" (Surah lxxxv. 21).¹ Thus God alone is held to be the "Source" of Islam; and if so, then all effort to find a human origin for any part of it must be in vain. Now, if we can trace the teaching of the Coran, or any part of it, to an earthly Source, or to human systems existing previous to the Prophet's age, then Islam at once falls to the ground.

¹ See also Surah vi. 19 and xcvi. 1. Also Ibn Khaldun, i. 194 and ii. 458.

It therefore behoves every true and earnest Believer, with the utmost diligence to test whether this claim be true or not. If their opponents can bring to light no human Source, they may contend that by admission Islam is indeed divine; but if otherwise, they cannot but perceive what fatal conclusion must be drawn. Let us then test the assertions of those who hold to the existence of human Sources, and see whether any portion of the doctrines and tenets of Islam can be traced to other Faiths or Sources preceding the Prophet's age, or existing at the time.

CHAPTER II.

CERTAIN DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF THE ARABS IN THE “DAYS OF IGNORANCE” MAINTAINED IN ISLAM.

SOME hold that these are its *initial* Source. When the desire arose in the mind of Mahomet to draw his people from the worship of idols to that of God Almighty; and when he remembered that their forefathers in the days of Abraham believed in the divine Unity; and further that they inherited many of the beliefs and customs of their pious forefathers; he was unwilling to force abandonment of them all, but desired rather to purify their faith, and to maintain such ancient practices as he thought good and reasonable. And so we find this passage in the Coran: *Who is better than he that resigneth himself to God, and worketh righteousness, and followeth the religion of Abraham the faithful? and truly God took Abraham for his friend* (Surah iv. 124). And again: *Say, The Lord speaketh truth; follow ye, therefore, the faith of Abraham the righteous; for he was no idolater* (Surah iii. 89). And yet once more: *Say, Verily my Lord hath directed me into the right way, the true faith, the religion of righteous Abraham, and he was no idolater* (Surah vi. 89).

Hence it came to pass that (excepting the worship of idols, a plurality of gods, the killing of daughters and other such evil practices), many of the ideas and customs subsisting among the Arabs from the time of Abraham were retained by the Prophet, and form part of his religion. Although some of the Southern and Eastern tribes became mixed up with the children of Ham, yet we learn, as much from the Tourât as from Ibn Hisham, Tabari and others, that the North and West of the country was occupied by the progeny of Shem. Some tribes were descended from Joktan, others from Hagar, Keturah, and Ishmael. Among the latter was the tribe of the Coreish, itself among the descendants of Abraham. Now, although the children of Shem had greatly lost the purity of their faith from mixing with the tribes of Syria, yet when all the people of those parts, except the Jews, had altogether forgotten the Unity of God, still the dwellers in the North and West of the Peninsula retained a certain knowledge of the Unity divine. There is every reason to believe that in the days of Job, the stars, sun, and moon were worshipped in those parts of Arabia;¹ and Herodotus, more than four centuries before Christ, tells us that the Arabs of his day had only two gods, *Orotal* and *Alilat*,² evidently meaning Allah-tââlâ and Allât, though as a foreigner he was not exactly acquainted with the local form of the names. The term Allah itself is repeatedly found in the seven Moallaqât, whose authors lived before the ministry of Mahomet, and also in the Dewan of Labid.

Still more, we know that the Kaaba was of old

¹ Job xxxi. 26-28.

² Bk. iii. 8.

the holy Masjid of the Arab tribes at large; for we learn from Diodorus Siculus, sixty years before the Christian era, that it then existed (Bk. iii.). From the use of *al* (or *the*) in *Allah* it is manifest that the Unity of God was never forgotten by the Arabs. The Coran, indeed, calls them idolaters for giving other gods the worship due to Him alone. But they never held those other gods on an equality with the great God above, whom by their adoration they sought specially to propitiate. The following story from early Moslem writers makes this all the more clear. "Some of the Abyssinian Refugees returned to Mecca when Surah liii. was being read. Coming to the verse: *What think ye of Allāt and Al Uzza and Mandat the other, the third?* Satan cast these words into the reader's lips: 'These three noble ones whose intercession is to be hoped for.' When the Surah ended, the whole company bowed down in adoration; and the Idolaters together with them, thinking that their gods had been thus graciously acknowledged. The strange episode was spread abroad by Satan, and the Refugees hastily returned to Mecca expecting to find the whole city converted." Beidhawi and others are the more inclined to believe this tale from the words in Surah xxii. 51: *Truly we have sent no Apostle or Prophet before thee, but when he read, Satan suggested some (error) in his reading; but God shall make void that which Satan suggested.*

Along with the early spread of idolatry, there still survived throughout Arabia the consciousness of One true God. Shahristani tells us this, and gives a long list of the local deities, and also of the customs

retained by the Prophet. Some denied a future life as well as a Creator, while others admitted both.¹ He then mentions a variety of tribal gods, and gives the name and place of eleven, including Ozza of the Cōreish, Hobal aloft on the Kaaba, etc.; also angels, genii, and heavenly bodies adored by the Sabæans. We are then informed of a variety of local customs in vogue among the heathen Arabs, some retained in Islam, as family restrictions in marriage, Hajj to the Kaaba with its various practices, visiting Safa and Marwa, throwing stones in Wady Mina, ablution, and several minor matters. Very similar is the testimony of Ibn Ishâc, and the Sirat al Rasûl, that notwithstanding the idolatry into which the Arabs fell when they lost the faith of Abraham and Isaac, yet throughout it all they never forgot the great God above all other gods. Thus at the new moon, the Beni Kinâna and Coreish would cry aloud "Labbeik, Allah Labbeik! Thou hast no Companion, but rulest over all";—acknowledging thus the oneness of Him they called upon; and while joining their idols in worship with the Highest, they yet placed them all under his hand. Then the Unity is thus expressed in the Coran: *Verily your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then ascended the throne to rule over all things. There is no intercession but by his permission. God is your Lord, wherefore serve him. Ah! will ye not consider?* (Surah x. 3).

From all this we perceive that while the Arabs up to the Prophet's time worshipped idols, they did so

¹ To these the Coran replies, Surah l. 14: *Is our power exhausted by the first creation; for these are in perplexity as to a first creation.*

regarding them as intercessors with the great God whom they held supreme.¹ The truth was so well known in Mahomet's own household, that his father and uncle bore the names Abd-Allah and Obeid-Allah,—“Al,” as we have seen, signifying *The One*. Hence we are sure that the Unity was acknowledged long before the Prophet's mission, as well as the various Meccan customs still in current use. Circumcision also was practised from of old, as we learn from the Epistle of Barnabas written about two centuries after Christ. Multitudes of idols being all around Mecca,² certainly little inspiration was needed to shew how false the system was, and the task was well carried out by Mahomet. While so many of the ancient places, rites, and customs were maintained, only one *quasi-idolatrous* practice has been kept up, namely, the Kissing of the Black Stone, which was then worshipped as of heavenly descent; the habit was so loved by the people, that it could not be forbidden, and indeed is still observed.

In conclusion, then, we find that the first “Source” of the Coran and Tradition consisted of the notions, customs, and religious beliefs, existing around Mahomet. And we know of no other answer as to the adoption of these, than that they were assumed to exist in the time of Abraham, and therefore were continued by the Prophet. Now, although we are told in the Tourât that the doctrine of the Unity, as well as circumcision, were

¹ Our Author pithily remarks that the Moslems of to-day who seek forgiveness through the intercession of their holy men are as much polytheists as these old Arabs were.

² Some say there were 360 around the Kaaba. But Ibn Ishâc gives authorities for only fifteen generations of idolaters before the Prophet's time.

of Abraham's time, yet in the Holy Scriptures we find no mention of Mecca, procession round the Kaaba, the Black Stone, the other Holy Places, etc.; nor can there be any doubt that all these things were the gradual creation of idol worshippers, and had no connection whatever with the faith and tenets of Father Abraham.

It is interesting also to note that some verses of the Coran have without doubt been taken from poems anterior to Mahomet's assumption of the prophetic office, in proof of which two passages in the *Sabaa Moallaqat* of Imra'ul Cays etc. are quoted, in which several verses of the Coran occur, such as, "*The hour has come, and shattered is the moon.*"¹ It was the custom of the time for poets and orators to hang up their compositions upon the Kaaba; and we know the Seven *Moallaqat* were so exposed. We are told that Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, was one day repeating as she went along, the above verse. Just then she met the daughter of Imra'ul Cays, who cried out: "O that's what your father has taken from one of my father's poems, and calls it something that has come down to him out of heaven"; and the story is commonly told amongst the Arabs until now.

The connection between the poetry of Imra'ul Cays and the Coran is so obvious that the Moslem cannot but hold that they existed with the latter in the Heavenly Table from all eternity! What then will

¹ The two passages given by our Author from the *Sabaa Moallaqat* contain several verses, more or less similar to the following texts in the Coran:—Surah liv. 1, xxix. 31 and 46, xxxvii. 59, xxi. 96, xciii. 1; this last,—*By the brightness of the morning; and by the night when it groweth dark.* The passages noted are the same in both, with occasionally a few verbal differences.

he answer? That the words were taken from the Coran and entered in the poem,—an impossibility. Or that their writer was not really Imra'ul Cays, but some other who, after the appearance of the Coran, had the audacity to quote them there as they now appear;—rather a difficult thing to prove!

In concluding this chapter we have no difficulty in asserting with every confidence that the customs, rites, and beliefs of the ancient Arabs, formed one of the most important Sources of the Coran.

CHAPTER III.

HOW FAR SOME OF THE DOCTRINES AND HISTORIES IN THE CORAN AND TRADITION WERE TAKEN FROM JEWISH COMMENTATORS, AND SOME RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS FROM THE SABÆANS.

AT the period when Mahomet was using the utmost endeavour to turn his people from idolatry to the Faith of Abraham, the Arabs had no religious writings acknowledged in common by them all, so that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to make them see the evils of their native faiths. There were three religions in the Peninsula—the Sabæan, Jewish, and Christian—each of which, as we hope to shew, helped to nurse Islam, which at the first lay like an infant in its cradle.

The SABÆANS have disappeared. No trace of them anywhere remains, and even of their history but little is known. We are told by Eastern authorities¹ that they were the first of all peoples who inhabited Syria; that they derived their faith from Seth and Idris; and that they possessed a book called *Pages of Seth*, in which were inculcated righteousness, truth, bravery, care of the poor, and avoidance of evil. They had

¹ What follows is from Abul Feda, who quotes from Abu Isa al Maghrabi.

seven times for prayer, five of which were at the same hour as chosen by the Prophet. They prayed also for the dead, but without prostration; fasted thirty days from night to sunrise, and also if any new moon rose badly, for the remaining day of the month; observed Eed from the setting of their five stars; and venerated the Kaaba. Hence we see that the Sabæans kept many observances still in force among the Moslems.

We turn to the JEWS. Of course it is known to all how numerous and powerful the race was in Arabia at the time of Mahomet, and especially before the Hegira. Amongst their chief tribes were the Beni Coreitza, Cainucaa, and Nadhîr, having their three villages in the vicinity of Medina.

When it became manifest that the Jews would in no wise recognise the prophetic office of Mahomet, he fought several severe battles with them and, not without difficulty, either took them prisoners and slew them with the sword, or at last expelled them from the land. Now, although these Jews were an ignorant people, yet they possessed and carefully preserved the Tourât, the Psalms, etc., and were called (as also the Christians) *The People of the Book*. Though the nation at large knew little or nothing of Hebrew, yet (like the Jews we see in Persia at the present day) they were familiar with the stories of the Talmud and the foolish tales which had come down from their ancestors, and which, being ignorant of their own Sacred books, they regarded as holy and divine.

The ignorant Arabs of the day looked upon their neighbours the Jews with honour and respect as being of

the seed of Abraham, and possessed of the Word of God. Hence when the Prophet turned aside from idols as hateful to the Almighty, and sought to bring his people back to the faith of Abraham, he betook himself with the utmost care to learn in what the teaching, customs, and obligations of that Faith consisted. Comparing these with the Coran and Tradition, we find the closest similarity between the two. Thus the Coran throughout bears witness to the faith of Abraham, to the truth of the Jewish religion, and the heavenly origin of their divine books. The following passages will be found to that effect :—*Dispute not with the People of the Book, but in the mildest way, excepting such as behave injuriously ; and say, We believe in that which hath been revealed unto us, and in that which hath been revealed unto you ; our God and your God is One, and to Him we are resigned.* And again :—*Say, We believe in God, and in that which hath been sent down unto us, and in that which was sent down unto Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes ; and in that which was delivered unto Moses and Jesus, and in that which was delivered to the Prophets from the Lord. We make no distinction between any of them ; and to Him we are resigned.* At this period, also, Mahomet made the Holy House (Jerusalem) the Qibla of his followers, being then (as it has since remained) the Qibla of the Jews.

To this it might be objected that Mahomet, as the “illiterate prophet,”¹ must have been unable to read,

¹ Surah vii. 156. The word used for illiterate is *Ummiy*. R. Geiger’s view is that this word has an altogether different meaning—viz. that Mahomet held he was of the *Ummat* or Arab people, and not an

and how then could he have gained all this knowledge from Jewish literature ? But even admitting it to have been so, it must still have been easy enough for him to have learned all about their beliefs and customs and tales from his companions, such as Obeidallah, Waraca, or even himself from his Jewish friends. For these people, though they had but an imperfect knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, yet well knew the foolish tales current amongst the Jewish nation. And now, if we compare the Coran with the tales in the Talmud and other books still current among the Jews, it becomes evident that although the Coran speaks of Abraham and many others of whom we read in the Tourât, still all the wild stories it tells us are taken from Jewish traditional Sources. And we shall now give a few specimens to prove that it is so.

FIRST. *Cain and Abel*.—In Surah v. 30–35 we have the following passage :—

And tell them the story truly of the two sons of Adam. When they offered up their sacrifice, and it was accepted from one of them, and not accepted from the other, Cain said, “I will kill thee.” Abel answered, “God accepteth (offerings) of the pious alone. If thou stretchest forth thine hand against me to kill me, I will not stretch forth my hand to kill thee ; for I fear God, the Lord of all worlds. I desire that thou shouldest bear my sin and thine own sin, and become a dweller in the Fire, for that is the punishment of the oppressor.” But the soul of Cain inclined him to slay his brother, and he slew him ; then he became one of the destroyed. And God sent a raven which scratched the earth to shew him how he should hide his brother’s body. He

Ajemy or non-Arab, as a Jew would be held to be. But seeing that the word has been universally held to mean unlearned (and unable to read), I think we must accept that interpretation. It does not, however, much matter in the present argument.

said, "Woe is me ! I am not able to be like this raven"; and he became one of those that repent (v. 35). For this cause we wrote unto the children of Israel that he who slayeth a soul,—without having slain a soul or committed wickedness in the earth,—shall be as if he had slain all mankind ; and whosoever saveth a soul alive, shall be as if he had saved all mankind.

Now this conversation and affair of Cain and Abel, as given above in the Coran, has been told us in a variety of ways by the Jews.¹ Thus when Cain, according to them, said there was no punishment for sin and no reward for virtue, Abel, holding just exactly the reverse, was killed by Cain with a stone. So also in the book *Pirke Rabbi Eleazer*, we find the Source of the burying of Abel as described in the Coran, there being no difference excepting that the raven indicates the mode to Adam instead of to Cain, as follows:— Adam and Eve, sitting by the corpse, wept not knowing what to do, for they had as yet no knowledge of burial. A raven coming up, took the dead body of its fellow, and having scratched up the earth, buried it thus before their eyes. Adam said, Let us follow the example of the raven, and so taking up Abel's body buried it at once.

If the Reader will look at the last verse (35) in the quotation above from Surah v. of the Coran, he will see that it has no connection with the one preceding. The relation is explained thus in the *Mishnah Sanhedrîn*, where in quoting from Genesis the verse,—*The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground*,²—the Commentator writes as follows:—"As regards Cain who killed his brother, the Lord address-

¹ Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziah ; also the Targum of Jerusalem. In Arabic Cain is called Cabil.

² Gen. iv. 10, "Bloods" in the margin for blood.

ing him does not say, ‘The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth out,’ but ‘the voice of his Bloods’;—meaning not his blood alone, but that of his descendants; and this to shew that since Adam was created alone, so he that kills an Israelite is, by the plural here used, counted as if he had killed the world at large; and he who saves a single Israelite is counted as if he had saved the whole world.” Now, if we look at the thirty-fifth verse of the text above quoted, it will be found almost exactly the same as these last words of this old Jewish commentary. But we see that only part is given in the Coran, and the other part omitted. And this omitted part is the connecting link between the two passages in the Coran, without which they are unintelligible.

SECOND. *Abraham saved from Nimrod’s fire.*—The story is scattered over various passages of the Coran, chiefly in those noted below.¹ Now whoever will read these, as well as the Traditional Records of the Moslems,² will at once perceive that the tale as there told has been taken from one of the ancient Jewish books called *Midrash Rabbah*. To bring this clearly to view, we must first shew the history as given in the Coran and Moslem writings, and then compare it with the Jewish tale in the above book.

In a work of Abul Feda we have the Moslem story as follows.³ Azar, Abraham’s father used to construct idols, and hand them over to his son to sell. So

¹ Surah ii. 260, vi. 74–84, xxi. 52–72, xix. 42–50, xxvi. 69–79, xxix. 15, 16, xxxvii. 81–95, xlvi. 25–27, lx. 4, and other passages.

² Such as the *Qissas al Anbia* and *Araish al Majalis*.

³ Ancient History from the *Mukhtasar fi Akhbár il Bashar*.

Abraham would go about crying, "Who will buy that which will hurt and not benefit him?" Then when God Almighty commanded him to call his people to the Divine unity, his father refused the call, and so did his people. Thus the matter spread abroad till it reached Nimrod, son of Cush, king over the country . . . who took Father Abraham, and cast him into a fierce fire; but the fire grew cool and pleasant unto Abraham, who came out of it after some days. And thereupon his people believed in him.

Again, in the Arâish al Majâlis we read: Before this, when Abraham one night came up out of his cave and saw the stars before the moon arose, he said. This is my Preserver.¹ *And when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star, and said, This is my Lord; and when it set, he said, I love not those that set. And when he saw the moon rising, he said, This is my Lord; but when it set, he said, Verily if my Lord direct me not, I shall be of those that go astray. And when he saw the sun rising, he said, This is my Lord; this is the greatest. But when it set, he said, O my people! Verily I am clear of that which ye associate together with God. Verily I direct my face unto him who hath created the heavens and the earth. I am orthodox, and not one of the idolaters.*

They say that Abraham's father used to make idol images and give them to Abraham to sell. So Abraham taking them about would cry: "These will neither hurt nor help him that buys," so that no one bought from him. And when it was not sold, he took an

¹ Surah vi. 76, etc.; all is from the Coran so far as in italics; and so also in the next two pages.

image to the stream, and striking its head, would say, Drink, my poor one ! in derision,—for his people and the heathen around him to hear. So when his people objected, he said, *Ah ! do ye dispute with me concerning God, and verily God hath directed me. . . . And this is our argument wherewith we furnished Abraham for his people. We raise the dignity of whom we wish, for thy Lord is wise and knowing.*¹ And so in the end Abraham overcame his people by such arguments. Then he called his father Azar to the true faith, and said: *O my father, wherefore dost thou worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor yet doth profit thee in any way,* and so on to the end of the story.² But his father refused that to which Abraham called him; whereupon Abraham cried aloud to his people that he was free from what they worshipped, and thus made known his faith to them. He said, *What think ye ? That which ye worship, and your forefathers also, are mine enemies, excepting only the Lord of the worlds.*³ They said, Whom then dost thou worship ? He answered, "The Lord of all worlds." "Dost thou mean Nimrod ?" "Nay, but he that created me and guideth me," and so on. The thing then spread abroad among the people, till it reached the ears of the tyrant Nimrod, who sent for him, and said: "O Abraham ! Dost thou hold him to be thy god that hath sent thee ; dost thou call to his worship and speak of his power to those that worship other than him ? Who is he ?" *A. My Lord, he that giveth life, and giveth death.*⁴ *N. "I give life, and cause to*

¹ Surah vi. 80-85.

² Surah xxvi. 75-77.

³ Surah xix. 40.

⁴ Surah ii. 260.

die." A. "How dost thou make alive, and cause to die?" N. "I take two men who at my hands deserve death, one I kill who thus dies; the other I forgive, who thus is made alive." Whereupon Abraham answered, "*Verily God bringeth the sun from the East, now do thou bring him from the West.*"¹ Thereupon Nimrod was confounded, and returned him no reply. The people then went away to celebrate their Eed, and Abraham, taking the opportunity, broke all the idols but the biggest, and then the story proceeds as follows:—

When they had prepared food, they set it before their gods and said, "When the time comes we shall return, and the gods having blessed the meat we shall eat thereof." So when Abraham looked upon the gods, and what was set before them, he said derisively, "*Ah! ye are not eating*"; and when no answer came, "*What aileth you, that ye do not speak?*" and he turned upon them and smote them with his right hand.² And he kept on striking them with a hatchet in his hand, until there remained none but the biggest of them, and upon its neck he hung the axe.³ Now when the people returned from their Eed to the house of their gods, and saw it in such a state, they said, *Who hath done this to our gods? Verily he is a wicked one. They answered, We heard a young man speaking of them; they call him Abraham. He it is, we think, who hath done it.* When this reached the tyrant Nimrod and his chief men, *They said, Bring him before the eyes of the people; perhaps they will bear*

¹ Surah ii. 260.

² xxxvii. 90.

³ Here the text is quoted: *He brake them all in pieces except the biggest, that they might lay the blame on it* (Surah xxi. 59).

witness that he hath done this thing. And they were afraid to seize him without evidence.¹ So they brought him and said: *Hast thou done this unto our gods, O Abraham?* He answered, *Nay but that big one hath done it*; he was angry that ye worshipped along with him these little idols, and he so much bigger than all; and he brake the whole of them in pieces. Now ask them if they can speak.² When he had said this, *they turned their backs*, and said (among themselves), “Verily it is ye that are the transgressors. . . . We have never seen him but telling us that we transgress, having those little idols and this great one.” So they broke the heads of them all, and were amazed that they neither spake nor made any opposition. Then they said (to Abraham), *Certainly thou knowest that they speak not.* Thus when the affair with Abraham was ended, he said to them: *Ah! do ye indeed worship, besides God, that which cannot profit you at all, nor can it injure you. Fie on you, and on that which ye worship besides God!* *Ah, do ye not understand?*

When thus overthrown and unable to make any answer, *they called out, Burn him, and avenge your gods if ye do it.* Abdallah tells us that the man who cried thus was a Kurd called Zeinun; and the Lord caused the earth to open under him, and there he lies buried till the day of Judgment. When Nimrod and

¹ Cotâda and Al Sidy are quoted here; and it is added from Al Dzahhâk, “Perhaps they may give evidence as to what we should do, and punish him.”

² A note is here added to the following purport:—Mahomet on this remarked that Abraham in all told three lies, all on behalf of the Lord, namely, “I am sick”; “the big one hath done this”; and what he said to the King regarding Sarah, “She is my sister.”

his people were thus gathered together to burn Abraham, they imprisoned him in a house, and built for him a great pile, as we read in Surah Saffat: *They said, Build a pile for him and cast him into the glowing fire.* Then they gathered together quantities of wood and stuff to burn; and so, by the grace of God, Abraham came out of the fire safe and sound, with the words on his lips,—*God is sufficient for me* (Surah xxxix. 39); and *He is the best Supporter* (Surah iii. 37). For the Lord said, *O Fire! be thou cool and pleasant unto Abraham.*¹

Now, let us compare the story of Abraham as current amongst the Jews, with the same story in Coran and Tradition as given above, and see how they differ or agree. The following is from the Midrash Rabbah on Abraham brought out of Ur (Gen. xv. 7).

.Terah used to make images. Going out one day, he told his son Abraham to sell them. When a man came to buy, Abraham asked him how old he was. Fifty or sixty years, he replied. Strange, said the other, that a man sixty years of age should worship things hardly a few days old! On hearing which the man, ashamed, passed on. Then a woman carrying in her hand a cup of wheaten flour said, Place this before the idols. On which, Abraham, getting up, took his staff in his hand, and having broken the idols with it, placed the staff in

¹ In the last few pages the quotations from the Coran are all from Surahs xxi. and xxvii., and the verses being so numerous and detached are not numbered in detail; but they will be found in passages succeeding verse 52 of the former, and verse 84 of the latter Surah. The Coran passages are throughout printed in italics.

the hand of the biggest. His father coming up, cried, "Who hath done all this?" Abraham said, "What can be concealed from thee? A woman carrying a cup of wheaten flour asked me to place it before the gods; I took and placed it before them; one said, I will eat it first, and another, I will eat first. Then the big one took the staff, and broke them all in pieces." His father: "Why do you tell such a foolish tale to me? Do these know anything?" He answered, "Does thine ear hear what thy mouth speaks?" On this his father seized and made him over to Nimrod, who bade him worship Fire. Abraham: "Rather worship Water that putteth out Fire." N. "Then worship Water." A. "Rather worship that which bringeth Water." N. "Then worship the Cloud." A. "In such case, let us worship Wind that drives away the Cloud." N. "Then worship Wind." A. "Rather let us worship Man that standeth against the wind." On this Nimrod closed:—"If thou arguest with me about things which I am unable to worship other than Fire, into it I will cast thee; then, let the God thou worshippest deliver thee therefrom." So Abraham went down into the flames, and remained there safe and unhurt.

Comparing, now, this Jewish story with what we saw of it in the Coran, little difference will be found; and what there is no doubt arose from Mahomet hearing of it by the ear from the Jews. What makes this the more likely is that Abraham's father is in the Coran called *Azur*,¹ while both in the Midrash and *Tourât* he is called *Terah*. But the Prophet probably heard the name in Syria (where, as we learn from Eusebius, the name had somewhat of a similar sound), and so remembered it.

¹ Surah vi. 74.

The Moslems, of course, hold that their Prophet gained the tale of Abraham's being cast into the fire neither from Jews nor Christians, but through Gabriel from on high ; and as the Jews, being children of Abraham, so accepted it, the Coran, they say, must be right. But it could only have been the common folk among the Jews who believed it so ; for those who had any knowledge of its origin must have known its puerility.

The origin of the whole story will be found in Genesis xv. 7 : *I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees.* Now *Ur* in Babylonish means a "city," as in *Ur-Shalim* (Jerusalem), "the City of Peace." And the Chaldaean *Ur*¹ was the residence of Abraham. This name *Ur* closely resembles in speech another word, *Or*, signifying light or fire. And so ages after, a Jewish Commentator,² ignorant of Babylonish, when translating the Scripture into Chaldean, put the above verse from Genesis, as follows : *I am the Lord that delivered thee out of the Chaldean fiery oven.* The same ignorant writer has also the following comment on Genesis xi. 27 : "Now this happened at the time when Nimrod cast Abraham into the oven of fire, because he would not worship the idols, that leave was withheld from the fire to hurt him,"—a strange confusion of words,—*Ur* the city, for *Or* light and fire. It is as if a Persian seeing notice of the departure of the English *post*, should put in his diary that an Englishman had lost his *skin*,—not knowing that the same word for skin in Persian means the *Post* in English.

No wonder then that an ignorant Jew should have

¹ Same as the present town, Mugheyr.

² Jonathan ben Uzziel.

mistaken a word like this, and made it the foundation whereon to build the grand tale of Abraham's fiery Oven. But it is somewhat difficult to understand how a Prophet like Mahomet could have given credence to such a fable, and entered it in a revelation held to have come down from heaven. And yet the evidence of it all is complete, as quoted above from the Jewish writer. Apart from this we know from Genesis that Nimrod lived not in the days of Abraham but ages before his birth. The name indeed is not in the Coran, though freely given in the Moslem commentaries and Tradition. As if a historian should tell us that Alexander the Great cast Nadir Shah into the fire, not knowing the ages that elapsed between the two, or that Nadir never was so thrown.

THIRD. *Visit of the Queen of Saba (Sheba) to Solomon.* —The story of Balkis, Queen of Saba, as told at length in the Coran, corresponds so closely with what we find in the II. Targum of the Book of Esther, that it was evidently taken from it, as heard by Mahomet from some Jewish source. The following is from the Surah of the Ant (xxvii. 17 *et seq.*):—

His armies were gathered together unto Solomon, consisting of Genii, men and birds, and they were kept back. . . . Solomon smiled at the ant and said: O Lord! may I do that which is right and well pleasing unto thee, so that thou introduce me amongst thy servants the righteous. And he viewed the birds and said, Why is it that I see not the Hudhud (Lapwing)? Is she among the absent ones? Truly I will chastise her with a severe chastisement, or will put her to death unless she bring a just excuse. But she did not wait long, and said, I have viewed a country that thou hast not seen: and I come unto thee from Saba with certain news. I found a female ruling over them.

surrounded with every kind of possession, and having a magnificent Throne. I found her and her people worshipping the Sun apart from God. Satan hath made their deeds pleasant unto them, and hath turned them aside from the right way, and they are not rightly directed,—lest they should worship God who manifesteth that which is in heaven and earth, and knoweth what they conceal and what they discover. God ! there is no God but he, the Lord of the great Throne ! Solomon said : We shall see whether thou tellest the truth or art amongst the liars. Go with this my letter, and having delivered it to them turn aside, and see what answer they return. The Queen having received it, said : O ye Nobles ! verily an honourable letter hath been delivered unto me. It is from Solomon. It is in the name of the Most Merciful God ;—“Rise not up against me ; but come ye submissive unto me.” She said : O ye Nobles ! advise me in the affair ; I will not resolve upon it, until ye be witnesses thereof. They said : We are men of strength and of great prowess ; but the matter belongeth unto thee : see therefore what thou wilt command. She said : Verily kings when they enter a city waste it, and abuse its most powerful inhabitants ; and so will they do. But I will send gifts unto them, and wait to see what the messengers will return with. So when they went to Solomon, he said : Ah ! do ye present me with wealth ? Verily that which God hath given unto me is better than that which he hath given you, but ye do rejoice in your gifts. Return unto them ; we will surely come unto them with an army which they cannot withstand, and we shall drive them thence humbled and contemptible. O ye Nobles (he continued), which of you will bring me her Throne, before they come submissive unto me ? A giant of the Genii cried, I will bring it unto thee before thou gettest up from thy place, for I am strong in this, and to be trusted. And one who had knowledge of the Scriptures : I will bring it unto thee before the twinkling of thine eye. Now when (Solomon) saw it placed before him he said : This is a favour of my Lord, that he may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful ; he that is grateful is grateful for his own benefit ; but he that is ungrateful, verily the Lord is rich and beneficent. And (Solomon) said : Alter her

throne, that we may see whether she be rightly directed, or be amongst those who are not rightly directed. And when she came, it was said, Is this thy throne? She said, It is as if it were; and knowledge hath been bestowed upon us before this, and we are resigned (unto God). But that which she worshipped besides had turned her aside, for she was of an unbelieving people. It was said to her, Enter the Palace. And when she saw it, she imagined that it was a great surface of water, and she uncovered her legs, when (Solomon) said, Verily it is a palace floored with glass. And she said, Truly I have done injury to my own soul, and I resign myself, along with Solomon, unto God, the Lord of all creatures.¹

Such is the account the Coran gives us of Queen of Saba. What it tells us of the Throne differs but little from the Targum, where it is said to have belonged to Solomon, and to have had no other like it in any land. There were six steps of gold to ascend, and on each twelve golden Lions, while twelve eagles of gold were perched around. Four-and-twenty other eagles cast their shadow from above upon the King, and when he wished to move anywhere, these powerful eagles descending would lift the Throne and carry it wherever he wished. Thus they performed, according to the Targum, the same duty the Coran tells us the Genii did. But otherwise in respect of Queen of Saba, her visit to Solomon, the letter sent by him to her, etc., there is a marvellous resemblance between the two, excepting this, indeed, that in place of the Lapwing of the Coran, the Targum speaks of a Red-cock,—not a very vital difference after all! The whole story is told in the Targum as follows:—

At another time, when the heart of Solomon was gladdened with wine, he gave orders for the beasts of the land, the birds

¹ Surah xxvii. 20-45.

of the air, the creeping things of the earth, the demons from above and the Genii, to be brought, that they might dance around him, in order that all the kings waiting upon him might behold his grandeur. And all the royal scribes summoned by their names before him ; in fact, all were there except the captives and prisoners and those in charge of them. Just then the Red-cock, enjoying itself, could not be found ; and King Solomon said that they should seize and bring it by force, and indeed he sought to kill it. But just then the cock appeared in presence of the King, and said : O Lord, King of the earth ! having applied thine ear, listen to my words. It is hardly three months since I made a firm resolution within me that I would not eat a crumb of bread, nor drink a drop of water until I had seen the whole world, and over it make my flight, saying to myself, I must know the city and the kingdom which is not subject to thee, my Lord King. Then I found the fortified city *Qitôr* in the Eastern lands, and around it are stones of gold and silver in the streets plentiful as rubbish, and trees planted from the beginning of the world, and rivers to water it, flowing out of the garden of Eden. Many men are there wearing garlands from the garden close by. They shoot arrows, but cannot use the bow. They are ruled by a woman, called Queen of Sheba. Now if it please my Lord King, thy servant, having bound up my girdle, will set out for the fort *Qitôr* in Sheba ; and having "bound their Kings with chains and their Nobles with links of iron," will bring them into thy presence. The proposal pleased the King, and the scribes prepared a despatch, which was placed under the bird's wing, and away it flew high up in the sky. It grew strong surrounded by a crowd of birds, and reached the Fort of Sheba. By chance the Queen of Sheba was out in the morning worshipping the sea ; and the air being darkened by the multitude of birds, she became so alarmed as to rend her clothes in trouble and distress. Just then the Cock alighted by her, and she seeing the letter under its wing opened and read it as follows: "King Solomon sendeth to thee his salaam, and saith, The high and holy One hath set me over the beasts of the field, etc. ; and the kings of the four Quarters send to ask after my welfare. Now if it please thee to come and ask

after my welfare, I will set thee high above them all. But if it please thee not, I will send kings and armies against thee ;—the beasts of the field are my people, the birds of the air my riders, the demons and genii thine enemies,—to imprison you, to slay and to feed upon you.” When the Queen of Sheba heard it, she again rent her garments, and sending for her Nobles asked their advice. They knew not Solomon, but advised her to send vessels by the sea, full of beautiful ornaments and gems, together with 6000 boys and girls in purple garments, who had all been born at the same moment ; also to send a letter promising to visit him by the end of the year. It was a journey of seven years, but she promised to come in three. When at last she came, Solomon sent a messenger shining in brilliant attire, like the morning dawn, to meet her. As they came together, she stepped from her carriage. “Why dost thou thus ?” he asked. “Art thou not Solomon ?” she said. “Nay, I am but a servant that standeth in his presence.” The Queen at once addressed a parable to her followers in compliment to him, and then was led by him to the Court. Solomon hearing she had come, arose and sat down in the Palace of glass. When the Queen of Sheba saw it, she thought that the glass floor was water, and so in crossing over lifted up her garments. When Solomon seeing the hair about her legs, cried out to her : Thy beauty is the beauty of women, but thy hair is as the hair of men ; hair is good in man, but in woman it is not becoming. On this she said : My Lord, I have three enigmas to put to thee. If thou canst answer them, I shall know that thou art a wise man ; but if not that thou art like all around thee. When he had answered all three, she replied, astonished : Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath placed thee on the throne that thou mightest rule with right and justice. And she gave to Solomon much gold and silver ; and he to her whatsoever she desired.

In the Jewish statement, we see that the Queen put several enigmas for Solomon to solve ; and though this is not mentioned in the Coran, it is in the Moslem traditions. And so with the story of

her legs; for in the *Arâish al Majâlis* we find the following:—When the Queen was about to enter the Palace, she fancied the glass floor to be a sheet of water, and so *She uncovered her legs*, that is, to pass over to Solomon; and lo her legs and feet were covered with hair; which when Solomon saw, he turned his sight from her, and called out, *The floor is plain glass.*

Here we would ask whether there is any reality whatever in all this story. There is indeed so much as we find in the First Book of Kings, x. 1–11,¹ which is as follows:—

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king,

¹ See also 2 Chronicles ix. 1–9.

to do judgment and justice. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones : there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

Now these are the facts of the Queen's visit, and all beyond mere fiction. The Jews themselves admit it to be so,—excepting, indeed, Solomon's magnificent Throne, though not its being carried aloft. The Coran account of Solomon ruling over Demons, Genii, etc., is in entire accord with what we have cited from the Targum ; and it is curious to find, as learned Jews tell us, that the origin of the notion lay in the similarity of two Hebrew words,¹ with two kindred words signifying *demons* and *genii*, and the ignorant Commentator confounding them together led to the strange error.

In concluding our notice of the fanciful tale which we have given from the Jewish Targum, we might say that it reminds one of such stories as we find in the "Arabian Nights." But strange that the Prophet could not have seen it so. Having heard it from his Jewish friends, he evidently fancied that it had been read by them in their inspired Scriptures, and as such introduced it, as we find, into the Coran.

FOURTH. *Hárüt and Márüt*.—There are many other stories in the Coran taken from the fanciful details of Jewish writers ; but we shall content ourselves with this one other before entering on more general questions. We shall first recite the tale of those two Spirits as given in the Coran and Tradition,

¹ (Meaning "a lady and ladies," in Ecclesiastes ii. 8.)

and then compare it with the same as told by Jewish writers. The passage in the Coran is this:—*Solomon was not an unbeliever; but the Devils believed not. They taught men sorcery, and that which was sent down to the two angels at Babel,—Hârût and Mârût. Yet these taught no man until they had said,—Verily we are a temptation, therefore be not an unbeliever!*¹

The following is from the Arâish al Majâlis:— .

The Commentators say that when the angels saw the evil doings of mankind ascending up to heaven (and that was in the days of Idrîs), they were distressed and complained thus against them: Thou hast chosen these to be the rulers upon earth, and lo they sin against thee. Then said the Almighty: If I should send you upon the earth, and treat you as I have treated them, ye would do just as they do. They said, O our Lord, it would not become us to sin against thee. Then said the Lord, Choose two angels from the best of you, and I will send them down unto the earth. So they chose Hârût and Mârût; who were among the best and most pious amongst them.

Al Kalby's version:—The Almighty said: Choose ye three: so they chose (Azz, i.e.) Hârût, and (Azâbil, i.e.) Mârût, and Azrael; and the Lord changed the names of the two when they fell into sin, as he changed the name of the Devil, which was Azâzil. And God placed in their heart the same fleshly lust as in the sons of Adam; and sending them down to the earth, bade them to rule righteously amongst mankind, to avoid idolatry, not to kill but for a just cause, and to keep free from fornication and strong drink. Now when Azrael felt lust in his heart, he prayed the Lord to relieve him, and was taken up to heaven, and for forty years was unable to raise his head for shame before his Maker. But the other two remained steadfast, judging the people during the day, and when night came ascending to the heavens, worshipping the name of the Almighty. Catâda tells us that before a month had passed

¹ Surah ii. 96.

they fell into temptation ; for Zohra, one of the most beautiful of women (whom Aly tells us was queen of a city in Persia), had a suit before them, and when they saw her they fell in love with her, and sought to have her, but she refused and went away. The second day she came again, and they did the same ; but she said, Nay, unless ye worship what I worship, and bow down to this idol, or kill a soul, or drink wine. They replied, It is impossible for us to do these things, which God hath forbidden ; and she departed. The third day again she came holding a cup of wine, and her heart inclined towards them ; so when they desired her, she said the same as yesterday, but they replied, To pray to other than God is a serious thing, and so is the killing of anyone ; the easiest of the three is to drink wine : so they drank the wine, and becoming intoxicated fell upon her and committed adultery : and one saw it, and they slew him. And it is said that they worshipped an idol, and the Lord changed Zohra into a star. Aly and others tell us that she said, Come not near me till you teach me that by which ye can ascend to the heavens. They said, We ascend by the name of the great God. Again she said, Come not near me till ye teach me what that is. So they taught her ; and forthwith she, repeating it, ascended to the skies, and the Lord changed her into a star.

Turning now to the Jews, the same account is given in two or three places of the Talmud, especially in this extract from the Midrash Yalkut :¹—

Rabbi Joseph being asked by his disciples about Azael, told them as follows :—After the Flood, idolatrous worship prevailing, the Holy One was angry. Then two angels, Shamhazai and Azael arose and addressing him said, O Lord of the Universe, when thou createdst the world, did we not say to thee, What is man that thou art mindful of him ? and now we are anxious about him. The Lord replied : I well know that if ye be sent to rule over the earth, your evil passions will have possession of you, and ye will become tyrants over mankind. They

¹ Cap 44.

answered : If thou wilt give us leave, and we shall dwell amongst them, thou shalt see in what wise we shall sanctify thy name. Go then, he said, and dwell amongst them.

Soon after, Shamhazai saw a beautiful maiden called Esther, and turning his eyes upon her to come and be with him, she said, I cannot surrender myself to thee until thou teach me that great name by which thou canst ascend to the heavens above. He told her, and she having spoken it, ascended upwards undefiled. Then said the Holy One,—Since she hath kept herself clear from defilement, she shall be raised aloft amid the Seven Stars, there to give praise unto the Lord. Forthwith the two went forth and consorted with the beautiful daughters of men, and children were born unto them. And Azael adorned the women he was inclined to with all kinds of beautiful ornaments. [Azrael is the same as in the Talmud is called Azael.]

Now anyone comparing the two stories together, must see that they agree, excepting that in the Moslem one the angels are called Hârût and Mârût, and in the Jewish, Shamhazai and Azael. But if we search whence the names in the Coran and Tradition came, it will be seen that Hârût and Mârût were two idols worshipped far back in Armenia. For in writers of that country they are so spoken of, as in the following passage from one of them :—

Certainly Horot and Morot, tutelary deities of Mount Ararat, and Aminabegh, and perhaps others not now known were Assistants to the female goddess Aspandaramit. These aided her, and were excellent on the earth.

In this extract, Aspandaramit is the name of the goddess worshipped of old in Iran also ; for we are told that the Zoroastrians regarded her as the Spirit of the Earth, and held that all the good products of the earth arise from her. Aminabegh also was held by the

Armenians to be the god of vineyards, and they named Horot and Morot the assistants of the Spirit of the Earth, seeing that they held them as spirits who had control over the wind so as to make it bring rain. They sat on the top of the lofty mountain Ararat, and sent down showers that fertilised the earth; the two were thus rulers of the wind.¹ The Armenians,—fancying that *Morot* came from *Mor*, genitive of *Mair*, “Mother,”—formed *Horot* in the same way from *Hair*, “Father.” When also it is said that the two angels came down to propagate mankind, the meaning is that they caused the earth to bring forth its produce for that end. Zohra in Hebrew reads as Ishtar or Esther, the same as of old was worshipped in Babylon and Syria as the goddess over the birth of children and promoter of passion and desire. In proof of all this, we find in the ruins between the Tigris and Euphrates the name Ishtar on the primeval tiles. The story of one Gilgamish, with whom Ishtar fell in love but was rejected, has been decyphered in ancient Babylonian character upon these tiles. Ishtar came to him having the crown upon her head and asked him to kiss her, and with many loving words and gifts to be her husband, when he would in her Palace have a quiet and happy life. Gilgamish in derision rejected her offer, whereupon she ascended to the sky and appeared before the God of the heavens.² It is remarkable that

¹ The origin of the name is traced still further East to the ancient Sanskrit wind-gods the *Maruts*.

² The original Babylonish text is here given, as indeed the Author does in most of the Oriental quotations. A close translation is also given, but only the general purport is here attempted.

the idolaters of Babylon are shown in this primeval story to have held that Ishtar, that is Zohra, ascended on high,—exactly as is told us in Moslem tradition, as also in the Jewish commentaries.

Now if we search for the Source of the above tale, we shall no doubt find it in what the Talmud says of the angels associating with women, in its commentary on the two verses in Genesis quoted below.¹ Speaking of the second verse, a Jewish commentator gives us the following interpretation:—"It was Shamhazai and Uzziel who in those days came down from heaven." Hence we see that the whole imaginative tale has come out of the mistake of this and other ignorant commentators. For the word *giant*, as shown below, was misconstrued by them to signify not those who tyrannically "fell" on the poor people around them, but angels who "came down, or fell, from heaven."² And this unhappy mistake has led to the spread of the strange idol-worship just narrated. Nor was there any apparent reason for the mistake; since in the Targum we find the name (Nefilim) explained in its right and natural

¹ Genesis vi. 2 and 4: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they chose . . . There were giants in those days, . . . when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." The "sons of God," according to our Author, mean righteous men of the seed of Seth. The Commentator quoted is Jonathan son of Uzziel.

There is a Sanskrit story of the similar ascent of two angels, and a Houry like Zohra, from which the Armenians may possibly have taken their tale; and from this idolatrous source the Jews no doubt received it; and from them, the Moslems.

² The term is Nefilim, *i.e.* persons who fell upon the helpless around them and committed violence and oppression on the earth.

sense as "giants." But by and by the Jews came to love the wild tales that spread abroad ; and so in a counterfeit book ascribed to Enoch, we are told that 200 angels under Samyaza (*i.e.* Shamhazai) came down from the heavens to commit adultery on the earth, as we read :—

The angels of heaven having seen the daughters of men, fell in love with them, and said to one another, Let us take for ourselves these women, the daughters of mankind, and beget children for ourselves. And Samyaza, who was their chief, said . . . Azaniel taught men to make swords, daggers, and shields, and taught them to wear breastplates. And for the women they made ornaments of kinds, bracelets, jewels, collyrium to beautify their eyelids, lovely stones of great price, dresses of beautiful colours, and current money.

Let it be remembered also that we have mention of this in the Coran :— *Men learned from these two (Hârût and Mârût) that by which to cause a division between a man and his wife ; but they did not injure any one thereby excepting by leave of God ; and they learned that which would hurt them and not profit them.*¹ This is similar to what we have seen above in the Midrash Yalkut, where we are told that Azael embellished the daughters of men with ornaments to make them lovely and attractive.

But enough has been said to show that the story of Hârût and Mârût, as we find it in the Coran and Moslem books, has been derived from Jewish sources.

FIFTH. *A few other things taken by Islam from the Jews.*—If time permitted, we could easily tell of many other narratives in the Coran, not in our Scriptures

¹ Surah ii. 96.

but taken from foolish tales of the Jews, about Joseph, David, Saul, etc.; but space will not permit, excepting for a few. Here, for example, is the account of "Sinai overhead" as we have it in Surah vii. 172: *And when we raised the mountain over them, as though it had been a canopy, and they imagined that it was falling upon them, (we said) Receive that which we have sent unto you with reverence, and remember that which is therein, if may be that ye take heed;* and we have two other passages (vv. 60 and 87) in Surah Bekr to the same effect;—the meaning being that when the Jews held back from accepting the Tourât, the Lord lifted Mount Sinai over their heads to force their reception of it. The same tale is given by a Hebrew writer thus: "I raised the mount to be a covering over you, as it were a lid."¹ It need hardly be said that there is nothing of the kind in the Tourât. The tale, however, may have arisen (Exodus xxxii. 19) from the fact that when Moses returning from Mount Sinai, saw his people worshipping the calf, "his anger waxed hot and he cast the tables (of the Law) out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." The words "beneath the mount," simply mean that he cast the tables down at the foot of Mount Sinai. And hence all this wild fiction of the mountain being lifted over their heads! We can only compare it to a like Hindoo tale of a mountain similarly lifted over the people's heads, very much resembling what we have in the Coran.

Here are one or two other tales of Moses in the wilderness; and first, that of the Golden Calf which came out of the fire kindled by the people at Sinai. The Coran

¹ From the Jewish story in the Abodah Zârah.

tells us that *Sameri also cast* (what he had into the fire) *and brought out unto them a bodily calf which lowed.*¹ The origin of this fiction we find in a Jewish writer,² as follows: "The calf having cried aloud, came forth, and the children of Israel saw it. Rabbi Yahuda says that Sammâel from the inside of it made the cry of the calf in order to lead the Israelites astray." No doubt the Prophet in this matter got his information from the Jews; strange that he should have been led to adopt this baseless tale. But he has used the wrong name Al Sâmerî. The name of the people, of course, occurs often in the Bible, and the Jews regarded the Samaritans as their enemies; but as the city of Samaria did not arise till some four hundred years after Moses, it is difficult to imagine how it came to be entered in this story.³ We also note that in this matter the Coran is in opposition to the Tourât, which tells us that Aaron was the person who for fear of the Israelites around him, had the molten calf set up. Another story, given us twice in the Coran,⁴ is that when the Israelites insisted on seeing the Lord, they were punished by death, but eventually restored to life again; and to add to the foolish tale we are told that it was the Tourât which appealed for help and thus obtained their revival.

SIXTH. *A few other Jewish matters.*—In the Coran are a number of Chaldaean and Syrian words which the Moslems have been unable rightly to explain,

¹ Surah xx. 90.

² Pirkê Rabbi Eleazer.

³ No doubt the Prophet thought that the Jews said Sâmerî (Samaritan) when they said Sammâel. They regarded Sammâel as the angel of death.

⁴ Surah ii. 28; iv. 152.

IDEAS COMMON TO JEWS & MOSLEMS 39

as *Torát*, *Jehannam*, and such like.¹ To know their meaning, it must be learnt from Hebrew, Chaldæan, and Syriac, for they are not genuine Arabic words.

The following ideas are common to both Jews and Moslems :—

In the Coran we are told of there being Seven heavens, and seven storeys to Hell,—which we also find in Jewish writings.² Similar accounts of the heavens and the earth we have also in Sanskrit sources, and also from Moslem tradition ; and also from such stories in Zoroastrian books as that there are seven climes, etc.

In Surah xi. 9, we are told of God's *throne being above the waters*; and similarly the Jewish Râshi, commenting on Genesis i. 2, says : “the glorious throne stood in the heavens and moved over the face of the waters.” Again, Moslems tell us that the Lord appointed an angel Mâlik ruler over Jehannam. Similarly the Jews speak of the Prince of Hell ; only the Moslems call him Mâlik, following the ancient idolaters of Palestine, who worshipped the Ruler of Fire as *Molech*.

In Surah vii. 44 there is mention of a wall or partition called *Aaraf* as separating Paradise and Hell, thus :—*And between the two a Veil, and upon Al Aaraf (stand) men.* So in the Jewish *Midrash*, when it is asked what the distance is between heaven and hell, the answer of one Rabbi is “a wall,” and of another “a span”; and again, “Our leaders tell us that the two are so close that a mere ray glances from one to the other.” And so we find similar passages in the Avestic and Pehlavi writings, as,—“the distance is but as that between light and darkness.”

In three passages of the Coran,³ we are told of Satan listening stealthily, and being driven away with stones ; another idea taken from the Jews, in one of whose books we find it

¹ Such as, Garden of Eden, Taghût, Forcan, Sakîna, Tabût, Hibr, etc.: all from one or other of the Hebrew, Syriac, or Chaldæan tongues.

² Surah xv. 44 ; xvii. 46. Jewish books, *Haggah*, and *Zohar*.

³ Surah xv. 17 and 34 ; xxxvii. 7 ; lxvii. 5.

written of the Genii that "they listened behind the curtain" in order to gain knowledge of things to come.

In Surah i. 29, we read :—*On the day we shall say unto hell, Art thou full? and it shall reply, Is there yet any more?* Similarly in a Jewish author:—"The Prince of Hell shall say, day by day, *Give me food that I may be full.*"

In Surahs xi. 42 and xxiii. 27, it is said of the Flood,—*The oven boiled over;* and in a Jewish work we have this: "The people of the Flood were punished with boiling water."

These similarities are interesting as showing the close connection between the Coran and Jewish remarks; but enough has been given of them.

SEVENTH. *Religious usages* of Islam taken from the Jews. There are many such, but it will suffice to mention two or three. We have seen that keeping the fast of Ramazân has been taken from the Sabæans and not the Jews; still there is one point certainly coming from the latter, and that regards eating and drinking at night during the month. In Surah ii. 83, we read:—*Eat and drink until ye can distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the day-break, then fulfil the fast.* In a Jewish book¹ we find it similarly laid down that "the beginning of the day is at the moment when one can but distinguish a blue thread from a white thread,"—a striking coincidence.

Again, Moslems of all lands, at the fixed time of their five prayers, wherever they happen to be, whether in the house or in the street, perform their devotions on the spot,—especially at places where people are passing by. This strange practice is entirely confined to them, and would be seemly in no other religion. But in the days of the Prophet there were

¹ Mishnah Berâkhoth.

Jews in Arabia who used this habit; for many of them were descended from the Pharisees, of whom our Saviour said:—"They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."¹ Thus the Companions of Mahomet looking upon the Jews as the People of the Book and children of father Abraham, regarded such practices as having descended from him, and so adopted, and have continued them to the present day, as we see, unchanged, though they are no longer kept up by the Jews themselves.

Does it not seem strange to the Reader, that although the Coran repeatedly attests our Scriptures as the Word of God, yet but one quotation is taken from them; viz. Surah xxi. 105,—*Verily we have written in the Psalms after the mention (of the Law) that my servants the righteous shall inherit the earth;* an evident reference to Psalm xxxvii. 11;—“But the meek shall inherit the earth.”

Two other matters borrowed from the Jews. Every Moslem thinks the Coran to have been on the heavenly Table (Lauh) from before the creation of the world, as is mentioned in a passage already quoted:—*Truly it is the glorious Coran, on a preserved Table.*² Now before saying anything about this Table, one may ask, was the Book of the Psalms in existence before the Coran or not? For we have given above a verse in which is revealed the inheritance given by the Lord to his servants, as mentioned in the Psalms before the Coran was revealed. The Coran quotes from the Psalms: is it not clear, therefore, that the Psalms were before

¹ Matth. vi. 5

² Surah lxxxv. 21 and 22.

the Coran? How then could the Coran, produced so late in the world, have been placed on the heavenly Table?

Now let us hear what Tradition tells us about this Table:—

One tells us that the Throne is made out of a pearl, as is also the Preserved Table, the height of which is 700 years' journey, and its breadth 300. All around it is adorned with rubies. The Lord commanded that there should be written upon it what he had wrought in Creation, and onwards till the Day of Judgment:—"In the name of the Lord, the Compassionate and Merciful. I am God and there is none else beside me. He that accepts my decree, is patient at my punishment, and thankful at my mercies, I will write and place him along with the righteous; he that doth not accept my decree, let him go forth from beneath my heaven," etc.¹

The Source of this tale is to be found in Jewish books, but vastly exaggerated by the Moslems. We find in the Tourât that when God desired to give forth the Ten commandments, he thus addressed Moses, who has himself given the account in Deut. x. 1-5:—

At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the Lord gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.

¹ Qissas al Anbia.

THE CORAN ON PRESERVED TABLE 43

Elsewhere also we are told that the two Tables were preserved in the Ark of the Covenant, made by Moses at the Lord's command.¹ But in course of time the Jews imagined that all the books of the Old Testament, nay the Talmud itself, were deposited in the Ark on the Tables. Mahomet hearing this of the Jewish Law and Scriptures, imagined the same of his own, and said (as we are told above) that the Coran also was placed on the Preserved Table; and his followers not understanding of what heavenly Table he spoke, swelled out the whole matter into the story given above.

The following is from a Jewish writer, Rabbi Simeon :—

What is that which is written that the Lord said to Moses : Come up to me into the mount, and be there ; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written ; that thou mayest teach them (Exodus xxiv. 12). The tables are the Ten Commandments ; and the Tourât the Law which is read ; and the Commandments also mean the Mishnâh ; and "that which I have written" means the Prophets, and the Holy Writings ; and "that thou mayest teach them" points to the Gemâra. And from this we learn that all these were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai.

No intelligent Moslem would for a moment credit this foolish story, knowing that the Mishna was not written till about the year 220 of the Christian era ; the Gemâra of Jerusalem in 430 A.D. ; and the Geimara of Babylon about 530 A.D. But ignorant Moslems believing it all, added their own Coran to the rest, and so comes this wretched story. The Reader will not think it necessary, we are sure, that anything more of the above

¹ Exodus xxiv. 12 ; 1 Kings viii. 9 ; Hebrews ix. 3, 4.

kind be added, excepting this, perhaps, that the Jews themselves hold the Tables to be of date beyond time; for one tells us they were made "at the creation of the world at the sunset before the Sabbath day."¹

The Mount Câf.—The origin of what the Moslems tell us about this mountain clearly originated from the Jews. Here is what the Tradition of the Moslems tells us:²—

The Lord Almighty formed a great mountain from green chrysolite,—the greenness of the sky is from it,—called Mount Câf, and surrounded the entire earth therewith, and it is that by which the Almighty swore, and called it Câf (see Surah 1. 1).

And again:—

One day Abdallah asked the Prophet what formed the highest point of the earth. "Mount Câf," he said. "And what is Mount Câf made of?" "Of green emeralds," was the reply; "and from hence is the greenness of the sky." "Thou hast said the truth, O Prophet; and what is the height of Mount Câf?" "A journey of five hundred years." "And round about it how far is it?" "Two thousand years' journey."

Now all these strange ideas are founded on the Jewish writing called *Hagîgâh*, where we meet with the following comment on the word *thohu* in Genesis i. 2: "Thohû is a green *line* (Cav or Câf) which surrounds the whole world, and hence comes darkness." And so the Companions of the Prophet hearing this explanation of the word Cav, and not understanding what was meant, fancied it must be a mountain, or succession of great mountains, surrounding the world and making it dark.

¹ From *Pirkê Abot*, v. 6.

² *Arâish al Majâlis.*

From all that has now been said, it must be clear to the Reader that the Jewish writings, and specially the fanciful tales of the Talmud, formed one of the chief Sources of Islam. And now we must turn our attention to the similar influence on Islam exercised by the Christian religion, and especially by those foolish stories which in the Prophet's day the heretical sects, with their forged and got-up tales, spread abroad.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE BELIEF THAT MUCH OF THE CORAN IS DERIVED FROM THE TALES OF HERETICAL CHRISTIAN SECTS.

IN the Prophet's day, numbers of Christians in Arabia were not only an ignorant people, but belonged to heretical Sects, which, on account of their dangerous influence, had been expelled from the Roman Empire, and thus had taken refuge beyond the border land. They had hardly any acquaintance with the Gospel or Apostolic writings, but were conversant with heretical books and the extravagant tales they contained. Now our argument is that Mahomet having but an imperfect knowledge of the Gospel, learned from these people, who were all around him, what he believed to be the purport of the New Testament. It was his object to establish a faith which should embrace and unite all races of the Peninsula, and the Christians among the rest. He therefore entered in the Coran very much of the teaching and vain imaginations of these ignorant sects. It is our object carefully to test whether this proposition is true,—that is, whether it be the case that such stories form one of the Sources of the Coran or not; and that we propose to make the subject of the present chapter.

I. *The Seven Sleepers, or Companions of the Cave.*

—The tale as given in the Coran is quoted in full below.¹ It is one of Greek origin to be found in a

¹ Surah xviii. 8-26. Dost thou consider that the Companions of the Cave, and al Rakim, were one of our signs and a great miracle ? When the young men took refuge in the Cave, they said, O Lord, grant us mercy from before Thee, and dispose our business for us to a right issue. Wherefore we struck their ears so that they slept in the Cave for a great number of years : then we awaked them. . . . We will relate unto thee their history with truth. They were young men who had believed in their Lord ; and we had abundantly directed them ; and we fortified their hearts with constancy when they stood before the judge ; and they said Our Lord is the Lord of heaven and earth ; we will by no means call on any god besides him ; for then we should surely utter an extravagance. . . . And they said to one another, When ye shall separate yourselves from them, and from that which they worship besides God, then fly into the Cave : your Lord will pour his mercy upon you abundantly and dispose your business to advantage. And thou mightest have seen the sun, when it had risen to decline from their Cave to the right hand, and when it went down, to leave them on the left hand : and they were in the spacious part of the Cave. This was one of the signs of God. . . . And thou wouldest have judged them to have been awake, while they were sleeping ; and we caused them to turn themselves to the right hand and to the left. And their dog stretched forth his fore-legs in the mouth of the Cave ; if thou hadst come suddenly upon them, verily thou wouldest have turned thy back and fled from them, and thou wouldest have been filled with fear at the sight of them. And so we awaked them out of their sleep, that they might ask questions of one another. One of them said, How long have ye tarried here ? They answered, We have tarried a day, or part of a day. Others said : Your Lord best knoweth the time ye have tarried. And now send one of you with this your money into the City, and let him see which of its people hath the best and cheapest food, and let him bring you provision from him ; and let him behave circumspectly, and not discover you to anyone. Verily, if they come up against you, they will stone you, or force you to return to their religion ; and then shall you not prosper for ever. And so we made their people acquainted with what had happened to them. . . . And they said, Erect a Chapel over them ; their Lord best knoweth their condition. . . . Some say the Sleepers were three, and their dog was the fourth ; others say they were five, and their dog the sixth, guessing at a secret matter ; and others say

Latin work of Gregory of Tours,¹ and may be described in brief as referring to the age of the Emperor Decius (249–251 A.D.), when Christians were terribly persecuted, and every endeavour made to destroy the Faith. To escape with their lives, seven men of Ephesus took refuge in a Cave near their city, and fell asleep for two hundred years, till the reign of Theodorus II. (447 A.D.). On awaking, one of them ventured into the City to see what in the interval had happened, and was overcome with amazement to find the Christian faith triumphant over all other religions. The Cross, once the sign of shame and disgrace, now the crown of the Emperor, and the mark of Empire; and nearly the whole people of the land turned Christians. All this is of course a mere story, composed no doubt to illustrate the rapidity with which, by the grace of the Holy Spirit and shedding of Martyrs' blood, the Faith had gained ascendancy at the last. No Christian ever dreamt that the tale was true; but such as the nurse tells her children of "the cat and the mouse," etc. But the Prophet has entered it with all gravity in the Coran for the instruction of his followers. Is it needful for us to add that such a tale could never have been placed by the Most High upon the heavenly Table, and from thence sent down to the Prophet; but was learned by him from some of the ignorant Christians around him?

they were Seven, and their dog the eighth. Say, My Lord best knoweth their numbers; none shall know them except a few. Wherefore dispute not concerning them, unless with a clear disputation, and ask not any (of the Christians) concerning them. . . . And they remained in their Cave 300 years and 9 years over.

¹ "Story of Martyrs," i. 95.

II. The History of Mary.—In Surah Mariam we are told that after the birth of the Holy Child, the people came to her and said, *O Mary, now hast thou done a strange thing; O sister of Aaron, thy father was not a bad man, neither was thy mother a wicked woman.*¹ According to Mahomet, therefore, Mary (Miriam) was the sister of Aaron, Moses' brother; which is all the plainer as elsewhere she is named *Mary daughter of Imrân*; ² and again, *We gave unto Moses the Book, and appointed him his brother Aaron as Visier.*³ Hence it is clear that Imrân, Moses, Aaron, and Mary (Mariam) are the same persons as are so named in the Tourât,—excepting only that in the Hebrew the name of the first is Amrâm; and in Numbers (xxvi. 59) we are told that “the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt, and she bare unto Amram, Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister”; and also in Exodus (xv. 20) we read of “Miriam (Mary) the prophetess, the sister of Aaron.” Now looking to the words in the Coran above quoted: *O Mary! O sister of Aaron*, it is quite evident that Mahomet is speaking of Mary the sister of Aaron and daughter of Imran, as the same Mary who, some 1570 years after, became the mother of our blessed Saviour! The Commentators have in vain endeavoured to explain this marvellous confusion of time and space. One attempt may be set down to the fabulous Jewish story regarding Mary the sister of Aaron, that “the angel of death had no power over her, that she passed away with the kiss of the Lord, and that no insect

¹ Surah xix. 28, 29.

² Surah lxvi. 12 and iii. 31.

³ Surah xxv. 37.

or worm could touch her person"—A strange conceit this: nor have any of the Jews ever said that she survived to the Christian era.

As regards Mary the mother of Jesus, we find many passages in the Coran opposed to the Four Gospels, and taken evidently from the Apocryphal writings of the heretical sects. For example, the following is from Surah iii. vv. 31 and 32 :—

Then the wife of Imran said, O Lord, I have presented unto Thee that which is in my womb as dedicated to thy service. Accept it, therefore, from me; for thou art he that both heareth and knoweth. So when she was delivered of the child, she said, O Lord, truly I have brought forth a female (and God knoweth what she had brought forth), and a male is not as a female. I have called her Mary; and I commend her unto thee, and her issue, against Satan the stoned one. Whereupon the Lord accepted her with a gracious acceptance, and caused her to bear an excellent offspring. And Zacharias took care of the child; and as often as Zacharias entered the chamber unto her, he found provisions laid beside her, and he said, O Mary, whence hast thou this? She answered, This is from God; for the Lord provideth for whom he pleaseth without measure.

We read also in Beidhawi and other Commentators that Imran's wife, who was aged and barren, one day saw a bird feeding its little ones, and at once longed for a child herself, and cried :—O Lord, if thou wilt give me either a son or a daughter, I will present it unto Thee in the Temple, thy Holy House. The Lord heard her prayer; she conceived and bore a daughter, whom she called Mary. Jelal ood Deen also tells us that some years after, Mary's mother, called Hanna, taking the child to the Temple, made her over to the priests, who in their turn made her over to Zacharias

to take care of; and he placed her in a chamber shut off from anyone else to enter. But the angels came there to tend and nourish her.

Again, we read in the same Surah, vv. 37-42:—

Now when the angels said, O Mary, verily God hath chosen thee, and purified thee, and hath chosen thee over all the women of the world : O Mary, be devout towards thy Lord, and worship, and bow down with those who bow down. This is a secret history. We reveal it unto thee, although thou wast not present with them when they cast their rods as to which of them should have the education of Mary ; nor wast thou with them when they strove among themselves. When the angels said, O Mary, verily God sendeth thee good tidings regarding the Word from himself ; his name is Jesus the Messiah son of Mary honourable, in this world and in that to come, and one of those that approach nigh to the Almighty. And he shall speak unto men in the cradle, and when he is grown up, and he shall be one of the righteous. She said, Lord, how shall I have a son, since no man hath touched me. He said :—Thus the Lord createth that which he pleaseth. When he decreeth a thing, he but saith unto it,—Be, and it is.

The notice here given of the “casting of rods” is thus explained by Beidhawi and Jelal ood Deen. Zacharias with six and twenty other priests who sought to have the charge of Mary, went to the river, in order to choose which should be the favoured one, and cast their rods into it. All sank but that of Zacharias, who thus became Mary’s guardian. Regarding all this we read in Surah xix. 16-31, as follows:—

And in the Book make mention of Mary, when she retired from her people to a place towards the East, and took a veil, apart from them. And we sent unto her our Spirit, who appeared unto her as a real man. She said, I flee for refuge from thee unto the Merciful, if thou fearest the Lord. He answereth

Verily I am the Messenger of thy Lord that I may give unto thee a holy Son. She said, How shall I have a son, for no man hath touched me, and I am no harlot. He said, So shall it be. Thy Lord saith, This is easy with me, and we shall make him a sign unto mankind, and a mercy from us; for it is a thing decreed. Whereupon she conceived him, and retired with him (in her womb) to a distant place; and the pains of childbirth came upon her by the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, Would to God I had died before this, and had become a thing forgotten, lost in oblivion! And one from beneath her called out:—Grieve not: verily thy Lord hath provided a rivulet under thee; and do thou shake the body of the palm-tree, and it shall let fall upon thee ripe dates ready gathered; so do thou eat and drink, and comfort thine eyes. Moreover, if thou seest any man, say, I have vowed a fast unto the Merciful, and I will speak to no man this day. So she came to her people, carrying the child in her arms. They said, O Mary, thou hast done a strange thing: O sister of Aaron, thy father was not a bad man, neither was thy mother a harlot. Then she made signs to the child. They said,—How shall we speak to an infant in the cradle? Whereupon the child said, Verily I am the servant of God: He hath given me the Book and hath made me a prophet.

Such, then, are the tales regarding the Virgin Mary which we find in the Coran and ancient Moslem Commentators. From whence did such strange fictions come? Clearly not from the true Gospel; but nearly all of them from the schismatic writings of ignorant men, spread abroad in ancient times amongst a people given to wild fictitious stories. To prove this, we now give full and satisfactory evidence. In the Prot-evangelium of James the Less, written in Hellenic Greek, we have the following:—

Anna looking upwards to the heavens, saw a sparrow in its nest, and sighed saying, O me! O me! Would it were the same with me. O me! to what thing am I alike? Not like

unto the birds of heaven, for the birds of heaven are fruitful before thee, O Lord. . . . And lo ! an angel of the Lord from above spake thus unto her : Anna, Anna ! the Lord God hath heard thy cry, and thy seed shall be spoken of over the whole earth. Anna said, As the Lord my God liveth, if a child, either male or female, be born unto me, I will offer it as a gift to the Lord my God, and it will be in his service all the days of its life. . . . And when her full time had come in the ninth month, Anna was delivered. . . . And she gave the breast to the child and called its name Mary.

In an Arabic apocryphal book, called the *History of our holy Father the Aged, the Carpenter* (Joseph), there is given the following account of Mary as a child. Her parents took her to the Temple when three years old, and she remained there nine years. Then when the Priests saw that the Holy Virgin had grown up, they spoke among themselves,—Let us call a righteous man, one that fears the Lord, to take charge of Mary till the time of her marriage, that she may not remain in the Temple. But before that time when her parents brought her, a new occasion had arisen, of which we read as follows in the Protevangelium :—

The Priest accepted the child, and having kissed and blessed her, spake thus to her :—May the Lord glorify thy name over all the races on the face of the earth. The Lord God will in the latter days manifest to thee the ransom of the house of Israel. And Mary remained like a dove in the Temple of the Lord, and received food at an angel's hand. And when she was twelve years of age, the Priests came together saying :—See now, Mary is twelve years old, and still in the Temple of the Lord ; what then shall we do with her ? . . . And behold an angel of the Lord stood beside him and said :—Zacharias, Zacharias ! come forth, and bring together all the widowers of thy people, and let each carry his rod, and whom the Lord God will

signify, his wife shall she be. And the criers went over the whole land of Judæa, and proclaimed it by the trumpet of the Lord, and all flocked together ; and Joseph also carrying his rod hurried to the Synagogue. So having come together, they went to the Priest who, gathering all their rods, went into the Temple and prayed. Having finished the prayer, he came forth, and gave to each man his rod, but upon none of them was there any mark. Joseph's rod came to him last of all. And lo ! a dove came out of the rod, and sat upon Joseph's head. Then the Priest said to him :—Thou hast been chosen to take the Virgin of the Lord ; take her therefore under thy protection. . . .

And Mary, taking a pitcher went forth to fill it with water ; and lo ! a voice saying,—“Hail thou highly favoured one : the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women.” And she looked to the right and to the left to see whence the voice came ; trembling she returned to her house, and putting down the pitcher, sat upon her seat. . . . And lo, the angel of the Lord from over her cried, “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with the Lord and shalt conceive by his word.” Mary hearing it, became anxious in her soul, saying, Am I to conceive, as every woman doth, and bring forth ? And the angel said unto her :—“Not thus, Mary for the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore that Holy Child shall be called the Son of the Highest, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.”

Anyone reading the above will see that it gives a close account of Mary's residence in the Holy Temple. We have pretty much the same in other books, such as the following from the Coptic book on the Virgin Mary :—

When placed by Hanna in the Temple, Mary was fed there like the doves, as the angels of the Lord brought her food from the heavens. When she worshipped the Lord in the Temple, they did reverence to her, and often brought her fruit from the Tree of Life, which she did eat with cheerfulness.¹ . . . Mary

¹ Coptic History of the Virgin.

lived in the Temple, a pure and holy worshipper, till twelve years of age. She had been her first three years in her parents' home, and nine years in the Temple. Then the Priests seeing that she was growing up a virtuous and God-fearing maiden, consulted together, saying:—"We must seek for a righteous God-fearing man to whom she may be given in marriage." And so having summoned the tribe of Judah together, they chose twelve men according to the names of each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the lot came out upon that good old man Joseph.¹

Then when she became with child, Mary was summoned with Joseph before the High priest, who thus addressed her:—O Mary, what is this thou hast done, and debased thy soul: thou who in the Holy of holies feddest from the hand of an angel, and hearest their hymns, . . . what is this thou hast done? Weeping bitterly she answered:—By the living God I swear that I am pure before him and have known no man.²

After that we have the account of Joseph and Mary leaving Nazareth for Bethlehem, where they rested in a cave, and there Jesus was born:—

And Joseph having found a cavern, brought Mary into it . . . And he tells us:—I looked up to the heavens, and saw the heavenly vault standing still, and the birds of the air trembling; then looking down upon the earth, I beheld a dish laid, and the workers sitting at meat around it, their hands therein, yet not taking out anything, or putting a morsel to their mouths, but their faces all looking upwards. And I saw sheep being driven, but they stood still, and the shepherd raised his crook to strike them, but his hand remained raised. And by the bed of the river I saw kids with their mouths as it were touching the water, but stopped from drinking. All things in fear and alarm.³

¹ Story of Joseph's dream.

² Protevangelium.

³ Protevangelium. It is remarkable that we have the same story repeated in the Rauzat al Ahlāb regarding the birth of Mahomet himself!

Referring now to what is told us in a quotation from the Coran given above, regarding Mary, the Palm-tree, etc., we give an extract from an apocryphal book called the *History of the Nativity of Mary and the Saviour's Infancy* :—

Now on the third day after she had set out, Mary was wearied in the desert by the heat, and asked Joseph to rest for a little under the shade of a palm-tree. So he made haste and made her sit down beneath it. Then Mary looking up and seeing its branches laden with fruit, said,—I desire if it were possible to have some of that fruit. Joseph answered :—I wonder at what thou sayest, since thou must see how lofty the branches of the palm-tree are ; and besides, I am anxious to get water, for all in my vessel is done, and there is none anywhere about to fill it with. Just then the child Jesus, looking up with a cheerful smile from his mother's bosom, said to the palm-tree :—Send down thy branches here below, that my Mother may eat fresh fruit of thee. Forthwith it bent itself at Mary's feet, and so they all ate of its fruit. When they had gathered all the fruit, it still remained bent, waiting for orders to arise. Then Jesus said :—O palm-tree, arise with cheerfulness, be one of my Father's trees in Paradise ; but with thy roots open the fountain beneath thee ; and bring me here for my refreshment some of the water flowing from that fount. At once the tree became erect, and began to pour from its roots water beautifully clear and sweet before them. So when they saw the water, they were all filled with delight, and drank of it with their cattle and servants, till they were satisfied and praised the Lord.

Between this story, as told here and in the Coran, there is just this divergence, that with the latter the Palm-tree appears at the time of the Messiah's birth, whereas this ancient Christian tale belongs to a somewhat later period, namely, after the journey of Joseph and Mary into Egypt.

III. The childhood of Jesus. — In the Coran we

are told that the angels, before the infant's birth, thus addressed Mary :—*And he shall speak to men in the cradle. . . . And he shall say, Verily I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, for I shall make unto you of clay the figure as it were of a bird ; then I will blow thereon and it shall become a bird, by permission of God.*¹ And again in another Surah :—

When God said, O Jesus son of Mary ! remember my favour towards thee, and towards thy Mother ; when I strengthened thee by the Holy Spirit, that thou shouldest speak unto men in the cradle, and when grown up ; and when I taught thee the Book and wisdom, and the Tourât, and the Gospel ; and when thou createdst of clay as it were the figure of a bird by my permission, and didst breathe thereon, and by my permission it became a bird. And when thou didst heal one born blind, and the leper, by my permission ; and didst raise up the dead by my permission ; and when I held back the children of Israel from thee at the time thou camest unto them with evident miracles ; and when such of them as believed not said, This is nothing but manifest sorcery.²

It need not be repeated that tales of our Saviour's childhood such as these have nothing to do with the Gospel, but like those before of the cradle, palm-tree, etc., have been taken from imaginary and fabulous Christian writings, such as the following from a Greek story-book called *The Gospel of Thomas the Israelite* :—

The child Jesus, when five years of age, was playing on the road by a dirty stream of running water ; and having brought it all together into ditches, immediately made it pure and clean ; and all this by a single word. Then having moistened some earth, he made of it twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath day when he did these things. There were many other children playing with him. Now a Jew, seeing what Jesus did, that he

¹ Surah iii. 41 and 43.

² Surah v. 119.

was playing on the Sabbath day, forthwith went his way to his father Joseph ; Behold, he said, thy son is at the stream of dirty water, and having taken up some mud, hath made of it twelve sparrows, and hath thus desecrated the Sabbath. On this Joseph went to the spot, and cried out :—Why dost thou do these things on the Sabbath day which it is not lawful to do ? Whereupon Jesus, clapping his hands at the sparrows, cried aloud to them,—Go off ! So they, clucking, flew away. The Jews seeing it, were astonished, and went and told their Rulers what they had seen Jesus do.

In the Arabic *Gospel of the Infancy*, the whole story is found twice over, in Chapter 36, and again in a different form in Chapter 46, because the latter part of the book is taken from *The Gospel of Thomas the Israelite*.

In reference to the supposed fact that Jesus spoke when an infant in the cradle, we find it said in the Coran (Surah xix. 29-31) that when the Virgin Mary's people reproached her, she pointed to Jesus, implying that they should ask him about the matter. And when they asked her, *How can we speak to a child in the cradle?* then Jesus answered them and said, *Verily I am the servant of God, who hath given the Book, and made me a Prophet.*

So also in the *Gospel of the Infancy*, Chapter 1, it is thus written :—

In the Book of Josephus, High Priest, who lived in the time of the Messiah (and men say he was Caiaphas), we find it said that Jesus spake when he was in the cradle, and called out to his mother Mary :—"Verily I am Jesus, the Son of God, the Word, whom thou hast given birth to according to the good tidings given thee by the Angel Gabriel, and my Father hath sent me for the Salvation of the World."

Now if we compare the above, taken from this

ancient Arabic work on the Infancy of our Saviour, with the Coran, it will be at once apparent that Mahomet has adopted the story, with its very words, changed only so far as to bring them into accord with his own belief and teaching; and doubtless it was all taken from this ancient apocryphal treatise. Should anyone ask, How could this have been?—the answer is that this book of the Childhood was translated into Arabic from the Coptic original, and must have been known to the Prophet's Coptic hand-maiden, Mary. From her he must have heard the tale, and believing it to have come from the Gospel, adopted it with some little change, and so entered it in the Coran. Now it is clear that such stories of infantile miracles are altogether opposed to what is written in the Gospel of St. John (ii.) regarding the turning of water into wine, where it is recorded that “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory.” Jesus was then over thirty years of age; and it is clear that before this no miracle had been done by him. But all the miracles noted in the Coran, beyond what have been mentioned above, and that of the Table to be spoken of below, were undoubtedly true and beyond question, as they correspond with what we read of in the four Gospels.

Now as to the *Table*, the following is the account given in the Coran (Surah v. 112–115):—

When the Apostles said, O Jesus Son of Mary! is thy Lord able to cause a Table to descend unto us from heaven? He said, Fear God if ye be true believers. They answered, We desire to eat therefrom, and that our hearts may rest at ease, and may know that thou hast told us the truth, and that we may

be witnesses thereof. Jesus Son of Mary said, O God our Lord ! Cause a Table to descend unto us from heaven, that it may become an *Eed* (day of festival) to the first of us and unto the last ; and a sign from thee ; and do thou provide food for us, for thou art the best Provider. God said, I will send it down unto you.

This miracle is not mentioned in any Christian book. So strange an imagination never could have had reality ; but its origin is no doubt to be found in the Supper which Jesus partook of with his disciples the night before his death. This *Lord's Supper*, which has ever since been observed by Christians as a sacred ordinance according to Christ's command, is described in each of the four Gospels.¹ It is also mentioned in Luke (xxii. 30), where Jesus promises his disciples "that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."²

We pass on to other notices in the Coran regarding Jesus and his Mother, that we may observe the Sources from which they were derived. Thus, in Surah v. 116 : *When God shall say unto Jesus at the last day, O Jesus Son of Mary ! hast thou said unto men, Take me and my Mother for two gods, besides God ?* And again, in Surah iv. 169 :—

O ye people of the Book ! Exceed not the just bounds in your religion ; neither say of God other than the truth. Verily the Messiah Jesus Son of Mary is the apostle of God, and his Word which he placed in Mary, and a Spirit, from him.

¹ Matthew xxvi. 20-29 ; Mark xiv. 17-25 ; Luke xxvi. 14-17 ; John xiii. 1-30.

² It is also possible that the dream of Peter in which food was sent down to him in a sheet may have originated the idea of the Table descending from heaven. It was, however, but a dream. Acts x. 9-16.

Believe, therefore, in God and his apostles, and say-not there are three (Gods); forbear this; it will be better for you. Verily God is one God. Far be it from him that he should have a son. To him belongeth whatever is in heaven and earth; and he is a sufficient advocate.

And once more, Surah v. 77 :—

They are very unbelievers who say, God is the third of three; for there is no God but the one God. And if they refrain not from what they say, a dreadful torment shall surely be inflicted on such of them as disbelieve.

From these verses it is evident, as Jelal ood Deen and Yahya say, that the Prophet must have heard from some of the heretical Christian sects, that they held the Almighty to be three, namely, God, and Mary and Jesus; and to oppose this evil teaching, it is over and again repeated in the Coran that God is one. Whoever may read the Tourât and the Gospel must know that Unity of the Almighty is at the foundation of the Christian faith;—as we read in Deut. vi. 4:—“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord”; a text quoted and enforced by Jesus himself, Mark xii. 29. The godhead of Mary is held by no real Christian. It is, alas, true that several Churches do worship her,—which is nothing short of idolatry, and altogether opposed to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures; yet it is in accordance with what many of the heretical works contained regarding Mary; and from them no doubt Mahomet learned the strange story he has put in the Coran.

In Surah iv. 156 we find it written that the Jews said: *We have slain Jesus son of Mary, the Apostle of God. Yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but a likeness was given unto them. . . . They did not really*

kill him ; but God took him up unto himself, and God is mighty and wise. It need hardly be said that this doctrine of the Coran is entirely opposed to the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, but it is in agreement with the teaching of some of the early heretics. Thus the ancient writer Irenæus tells us that Basilides, one of their chief men, held this view, for he wrote of Jesus as follows :—

He suffered not ; but Simon a Cyrenian was compelled to carry the cross for him ; and he through error and ignorance was crucified, being transfigured by him, that it might be thought he was Jesus himself.

It is evident then that Mahomet learned this story as propagated by the disciples of Basilides ;—a story every one must know to be opposed to the writings of the Prophets, who said that the Messiah would come as a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind ; and to the testimony of the Apostles, who with their own eyes saw our blessed Redeemer on the cross. Mahomet, however, failed to see that the object of this heretic was to hold up the vain imagination that Jesus was not clothed with manhood proper, but had only the semblance and not the reality of it. If so, it was not possible that he could have been born of the Virgin, and suffered on the cross ; but that men were deceived into thinking that these things happened to him. Now all this heretical teaching is entirely opposed not only to the Gospel, but to the Coran itself. Accordingly, it did not become Mahomet to accept part of the wild imaginations of Basilides, and reject a part ; for if the basis of a heretic's teaching is false, how can the notions and doctrines derived therefrom be true ? And

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yet we see that the Prophet did so, in accepting the vain imagination of the heretic as given in the verse of the Coran quoted above.

The Moslems hold that Christ announced to his followers that they were to expect a Prophet named Ahmed; and in proof they adduce the following verse from the Coran, S. lxi. 6:—*And when Jesus Son of Mary said, O children of Israel, I am the apostle of God unto you, confirming that which was delivered unto me in the Tourdāt, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, named Ahmed.* This passage refers no doubt to the Comforter, the Paraclete promised in the Gospel of John.¹ But anyone who attentively reads what is said in the passages on the subject, will perceive that they make no promise of any prophet's advent, but of the coming of the Holy Ghost;—a promise fulfilled shortly after our Saviour's ascent to heaven, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, as described in Acts ii. 1–11.

The origin of the misapprehension in the Coran came from the Arabs not knowing the meaning of Paraklete (Faraclete), and fancying it to signify Ahmed, or "the praised one"; while the real sense of the name is the Comforter. But there is in Greek another word which to the ear of a foreigner would have a nearly similar sound, namely, Periclete (praised or celebrated); and it is extremely probable that the people of Arabia, not familiar with Greek, mistook its meaning thus and named the promised one Ahmed, or "the praised."²

¹ John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7. Called also the *Faraclete*.

² Our Author exemplifies this by words begun with two Arabic letters sounding very similar, and liable to be mistaken one for the other.

We read in ancient times of one Mani¹ in Iran, who fancied himself a prophet, and claimed to be the Paraklete promised by the Messiah. But he was rejected by the Christians of Persia, who, being well acquainted with the gospel, knew that our Saviour made no promise of any prophet to come.

We have it in tradition that Mahomet said Jesus would descend upon earth, there live forty years, and become married.² Anyone acquainted with the Bible will understand how this strange imagination arose ; for in Rev. xix. 7-9, we read as follows :—

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

And if it be asked, Who is the Bride spoken of here ? the answer is in ch. xxi. 2 : “ And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” We see then that the Bride spoken of here is the Christian Church which will be on the earth at the second coming of Jesus ; and their “ marriage ” is simply the symbol of the perfect union, love and devotion that will subsist between the two, as between a husband and his wife. The whole story of the Commentators is but a foolish myth.³

¹ *Manes*, and hence the Manichæans.

² *Arâish al Majâlis*.

³ The argument might have been strengthened by a reference to Ephesians v. concerning the marriage of Christ and the Church.

Again we read in Surah iii. 48 :—*O Jesus ! I will cause thee to die,*—the meaning being that after his return to this earth Jesus will die. This is entirely opposed to the Scriptures, for in Revelation i. 17, 18 Jesus says, “I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth, and was dead : and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death.” The story has arisen from a passage in a traditional book¹ regarding Enoch and Elias, who ascended without dying to the heavens and of whom we are told :—“It will happen to them that they will return to the world in the last time, in the day of grief and fear and distress, and then will die.” And in the Coptic tale of the Falling asleep of Mary, it is said of Enoch and Elias,—“Of necessity both of these will at the last taste of death.” So when the Companions of the Prophet had such foolish notions in their heads, they no doubt concluded that Jesus too, like Enoch and Elias, would eventually be made to taste of death ; and moreover, knowing that he had ascended up to heaven, they thought that his death would follow his return at the Second coming. Hence the way in which they tried to illustrate the above text. It may be noticed also that in other Surahs we find it written that “Every soul shall taste of death.”²

IV. Some other stories from Christian or heretical writers.—When God would create Adam he sent angels and archangels, one after another, to bring a handful of earth. At last Azrael, having descended, brought a

¹ History of Joseph the Carpenter.

² Surah xxix. 57, and iii. 182.

handful gathered from every quarter, and said, "O Lord, thou knowest whence I have brought it."¹ Abul Feda, quoting from Ibn Athîr, gives us this account:—

The Prophet said that God created Adam from a handful of earth gathered from all round the world . . . and that he was called Adam as formed out of the earth *below* (*i.e.* adîm).

The following is also taken from the heretic Marcion, who is quoted by an old Armenian writer as follows:—

The God of the Law seeing the earth fair to look upon, desired to make man out of it, and having descended to Matter, *Hylē* (ὕλη) on the earth, he said, Give me some of thy soil, and I will from myself impart to it a soul. . . . So when Matter had given to him some of the earth, he created man and breathed into him a soul; and for this reason he was called Adam, because he was made out of the earth.

According to the heretic Marcion, he whom they name "the God of the Law," who got earth for the creation of man, was only an angel; for they say that the Law came down from one of the angels hostile to the great God. And that Angel they call Lord of the universe, Creator of all things, and Prince of this world. This last is taken from the Gospel of John, where the devil is so called.² Marcion tells us that this angel was an inhabitant of the Second heaven, and at first knew nothing of the great God; but when he came to know of his existence, then he turned out to be an enemy of "the Unknown God," and sought that mankind should neither know nor worship him.

This imaginative story of the creation is in entire

¹ *Qissas al Anbia.*

² John xiv. 30. The Moslems apply the name "Prince of the World" to their Prophet, not understanding its true meaning.

accord with what the Moslems say regarding Azâzil, who came to dwell in the Second heaven. But the rest of the tale about him belongs to the Zoroastrian books, which will be noticed in our Fifth chapter.

In Surah xix. vv. 69-73 we have the following passage:—

By the Lord! we shall surely assemble them round about Hell on their knees. Then will we draw forth from every Sect such of them as shall have been most rebellious against the Merciful; and we best know which of them are the more deserving to be burned therein. There are none of you but shall descend into the same. It is an established decree with thy Lord. Then we will deliver the pious ones; but will leave the wicked ones therein upon their knees.

In explaining this passage Tradition varies. Some say that all believers will descend into Hell, but will not be touched by the flames; others that it refers to the Bridge Sirât, over which all must pass, and which is over Jehannam. It is just possible that the words, "There are none of you but shall descend into it," may be borrowed from the way in which some ignorant Christians interpreted the "Trying with fire," mentioned in the Gospel,¹ as if it meant that they were thus to be purified of their sins. But if the Coran here refers to the Bridge Sirât, the idea cannot be from any of them, but from the Zoroastrian books, to be noticed below.

The BALANCE is mentioned in two passages of the Coran, Surah xlvi. 16:—*It is God who hath sent down the Scripture with truth, and the Balance; and what shall inform thee whether the time be near at hand?*

¹ Mark ix. 49; 1 Corinthians iii. 13.

And Surah ci. 5, 6:—*Moreover, he whose Balance shall be heavy will lead a pleasing life; but he whose Balance shall be light, his dwelling-place shall be Hell.*

We need not enter into the vast store of Tradition devoted to this great *Balance*, but simply enquire whence the notion arose. There is a fictitious work called “The Testament of Abraham,” written originally in Egypt, and thence translated into Greek and Arabic; and what is there said of the weighing of deeds, good and bad, we shall compare with what is in the Coran. In this book we are told that when the Angel of Death wished to seize the soul of Abraham, the patriarch desired that before his death he might see the wonders of the heavens and of the earth. Having obtained permission, he ascended and beheld all the scenes around him. After a time he ascended the Second heaven, and there saw the Balance by which angels try the deeds of mankind. The following is an extract from this work:—

Betwixt the two doors there stood a throne . . . and upon it was seated a wonderful Man. . . . Before him stood a Table, like as of crystal, all covered with gold and linen. And upon the Table a book lay, its length six fingers, and breadth ten fingers. On the right hand of it and on the left, stood two angels having paper and ink and pen. In front of the Table sat a brilliant angel, holding in his hand a Balance. On the left sat an angel, as it were all of fire, merciless and stern, having in his hand a trumpet, in which was flaming fire, the touchstone of sinful men. The wonderful Man seated on the throne was judging the souls and passing sentence upon them. And the two angels on the right and on the left were writing down, the one on the right, righteous deeds; and he on the left, sinful ones. And he that stood before the Table holding the Balance was weighing

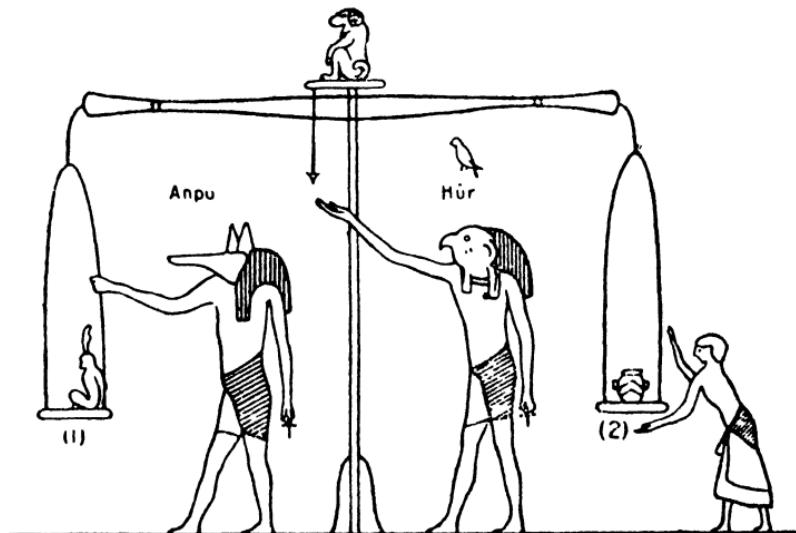
the souls, and the angel holding the fire, passing judgment upon them. And so Abraham asked Michael, the Captain of the Host, What is all this that we see ? He answered, That which thou seest, holy Abraham, is the Judgment and Retribution.

Thereafter we are told that every soul whose good deeds equalled its evil ones was reckoned neither as one of the saved nor as one of the condemned, but put in a position between the two, like what is told us in the Coran already quoted, "Between the two a veil, and men upon al Arâf."

From the above it is clear that what Mahomet mentions about the Balance in the Coran was derived from this fictitious "Testament of Abraham," written in Egypt some four hundred years before the Hegira, and of which an account was probably given him by his Coptic concubine Mary.

But what is there mentioned about the Balance belongs to a far earlier source, namely, to a book called "The Book of the Dead." Many copies of this primeval work have been found in the sepulchres of the ancient idolatrous Egyptians, placed there because supposed to have been written by one of their gods called *Thoth*, and with the notion that they would be read by the dead buried there. In it is a strange picture illustrating the Judgment hall of Osiris, of which our Author has given an interesting copy. There are in it two deities on opposite sides of a Balance. One of these is weighing the heart of a good man placed in a vessel on the scale, and in the corresponding scale opposite is an idol called *Mā* or Truth. The great god is recording in ancient Egyptian the fate of the departed :—"Osiris the justified is alive ; his Balance is

equal in the midst of God's palace ; the heart of Osiris the justified is to enter into its place. Let the great god, Lord of Hermopolis, say so." Over some of the idols are their names ; and above a savage figure, the words, "Conqueror of his enemies, god of *Amenti* (Hades)" ; several times also are repeated the words, "Life and peace to Osiris." Below we have repro-



(1) Image of the Goddess of Truth.

(2) Vessel with the heart of the deceased.

duced a sketch of the "Balance" which stands at one side of this most remarkable picture.

From all this it is clear that what we have in the Coran about the "Balance" was learned by the Prophet from such Sources as the above.

As regards the Ascent to heaven, Tradition tells us that Mahomet there saw Father Adam, at times weeping

and groaning, at times happy and rejoicing ; of which in the *Mishkât* we have this account :—

When he opened, we went up to the lower heaven. Lo ! a man seated, on his right hand were dark figures, and on his left dark figures. When he looked to his right, he laughed ; when to the left, he wept. And he said, Welcome to the righteous Prophet, and to the excellent Son. I then asked Gabriel, Who is this ? It is Adam, he said, and these dark figures on his right, and on his left, are the spirits of his sons. The people on his right hand are the inhabitants of Paradise ; and the dark figures on his left are those of the Fire ; when he looks to his right, he smiles ; and when he looks to the left, he weeps.

The same tale we find in the ancient “Testament of Abraham,” as follows :—

So Michael turned the chariot, and took Abraham towards the east through the first gate of heaven. There Abraham saw two roads ; one strait and difficult, the other wide and easy. He beheld also two gates, one wide like its road, and another narrow like the other road. Outside the two gates they beheld a Man sitting on a golden throne, his aspect terrible like unto the Lord. They saw a multitude of souls driven by the angels through the wide gate, but few souls led by the angels through the narrow one. And when the great Man seated on the golden throne saw but few passing through the narrow gate, and so many through the wide gate, forthwith he grasped the hair of his head and his beard on either side, and cast himself weeping and groaning from his throne upon the ground. But when he saw many souls entering in by the narrow gate, he arose from the ground, and with joy and rejoicing seated himself again upon the throne.

Then Abraham asked the Captain of the Host :—My Lord Commander ! Who is that great Man adorned with so much grandeur, who sometimes weeps in great distress, and sometimes rejoices and is glad ? Then the Spirit (Michael) answered :—This is Adam, the first created man, adorned with so much glory ; and

here he beholds the world and the multitudes who derive their existence from himself. When he beholds many souls passing the narrow gate, then rising up he seats himself upon his throne in joy and gladness, because the narrow gate is for the righteous and leadeth unto life eternal. Those passing through it are on the way to Paradise, and hence the first created Adam rejoiceth, because he seeth souls that are saved. But when he beholds many passing through the wide gate, then he seizes the hair of his head, beats and casts himself to the ground crying bitterly. For the wide gate leadeth the wicked to everlasting destruction.

It were easy to shew that many other passages in the Coran are in close accord with the tales of ignorant Christians, or of heretical writers, anterior to the Prophet; but the examples given above may amply suffice. Before closing the chapter, however, it seems proper to ask whether Mahomet, having borrowed so much from fictitious works, has taken anything at all from the Gospel, or Apostolic writings. In answer to this serious question; we reply that throughout the Coran only one verse is quoted from the Gospel; and by a well-known Traditionist possibly one verse from St. Paul.

First. In Surah vii. 38 it is written:—*They that charge our signs with falsehood and proudly reject them, the gates of heaven shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise until a camel pass through the eye of a needle;*—compared with this in three of the Gospels: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”¹

Second. Abu Hureira tells in the Mishkât of the Prophet having stated that God Almighty had said as

¹ Matthew xix. 24; Mark x. 25; Luke xviii. 25.

follows:—"I have prepared for the righteous what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man." See similar words in 1 Cor. ii. 9.

But this absence of actual quotation does not detract from the second-hand, and in many respects fictitious, knowledge of the Christian past. And we conclude that the Gospel, and especially some of the ancient heretical works, were clearly among the Sources of Moslem teaching,—a conclusion altogether beyond question.

CHAPTER V.

SOME THINGS IN THE CORAN AND TRADITION DERIVED FROM ANCIENT ZOROASTRIAN AND HINDOO BELIEFS.

WE learn from Arabian and Greek historians that previous to Mahomet's birth, and during his life, many parts of the Peninsula were ruled over by Persian kings. For example, Kesra Nousherwan having sent an army to Hîra, put down Hârith the king, and in his room placed the subservient Mandzar on the throne. He also sent an army to Yemen, and having expelled the Abyssinian invaders, restored the old king, whose progeny followed him in the government of the land. Abulfeda tells us that "the family of Mandzar, and race of Nasr son of Rabia, were the Kesra's governors over the Arabs of Irac"; also that after the Himyarites, "there were four Abyssinian governors of Yemen, and eight Persians, and then it became ruled over by Islam." It is clear, then, that both in the time of Mahomet and previously, the Persians had constant intercourse with Arabia; and being incomparably more learned than its ignorant people, must have had an important influence on their religion, on their customs, and on their knowledge at large. Both history and Coranic commentaries shew that the tales and

songs of Iran were spread abroad among the tribes of Arabia. Thus Ibn Hisham tells us that in the days of the Prophet, stories of Rustem, Isfandiyâr, and the ancient kings of Persia, were not only current at Medina, but that some of the Coreish used delightedly to compare them with the similar tales in the Coran. He adds as follows:—

The Prophet of the Lord, when he sat in the assembly, used to pray there to the Almighty, read to them from the Coran, and warn the Coreish of what in times past had happened to the unbelieving nations. It so came to pass that one day after he had left, Nadhr son of Al Hârith came in and told them stories of the great Rustem and of Isfandiyâr and the kings of Persia. Then he said, “I swear by the Lord, that the stories of Mahomet are not better than my own ; they are nothing but tales of the past which he hath written out, just as I have written mine out.” Then descended this passage :—*They say these are fables of the ancients which he hath caused to be written down, dictated by him morning and evening. Say, He hath revealed the same who knoweth the sacred things in heaven and earth ; verily he is gracious and merciful.*¹ . . . *When our verses are recited unto him, he saith,—Fables of the ancients.*² *Woe unto every lying and wicked one that heareth the verses of God read unto him, then proudly resisteth, as if he heard them not ; Wherefore denounce unto him a fearful punishment.*³

These stories of Rustem, Isfandiyâr, and other ancient kings of Persia, are similar to what Ferdosi, some centuries after the Prophet, turned into song in his Shahnâma. Certainly as the Arabs used to read of the ancient sovereigns, they could not have been ignorant of stories such as those of Jamshîd, the ascent of Ahriman out of darkness, Artâ Vîraf, the bridge Chinavad, and such like. Our object is by

¹ Surah xxv. 6, 7.

² Surah lxviii. 15.

³ Surah xlvi. 6, 7.

careful search to ascertain whether these stories and the like had any effect on the Coran and Tradition. We are sure that they had ; and that Persian tales and doctrines form one of the Sources of Moslem faith. Many also of the stories, literary, imaginative, and religious, were not confined to Iran, but were current among the Hindoos in India, and spread abroad amongst the people travelling by Herat and Merve, and so westward. It will be asked what our proof of all this is ; and we propose accordingly to quote some passages from the Coran and Tradition, and then to compare these with what may be found in ancient Zoroastrian and Hindoo writings.

We begin with *the ascent,—Mirâj—of the Prophet.* The following account of it is in Surah xvii. 1 :—*Praise be to him who transported his servant by night from the Sacred temple (of Mecca) to the farther Temple (Jerusalem) the surroundings of which we have blessed, that we might shew him some of our signs, for he is both the hearing and the seeing One.* In the interpretation of this verse the greatest difference has prevailed. Thus Ibn Ishac gives this account from Ayesha :—“The body of the Prophet did not disappear, but the Lord carried off his soul by night.” Tradition also tells us that the Prophet himself said :—“Mine eyes slept, but my heart was awake.”¹ Mohee ood Deen is of the same opinion ;—writing of the Ascent and Night Journey, he says, in explanation of the above passage :—

Praised be he that transported his servant ; that is, released him from material surroundings, and caused a spiritual separation

¹ *Sirat al Basûl.*

without any change of the body. *By night*, i.e. in darkness surrounding the physical frame; for the ascent could only be carried out spiritually through the inner senses of the body. *From the holy Masjid*; that is, from the centre of a sacred heart, free from bodily corruption and sensual coverings. *To the further Masjid*; that is, the fountain of the spirit, far removed from the corporeal world, and close to the manifestation of the Almighty's glory, in order that he might the better understand that which, *We might shew him some of our signs*, even if they be within the heart, which can only be done in all their glory and grandeur by spiritual discernment within the soul; namely, that we can shew him of our Nature and perfection.

Hence, if we accept the above, together with the witness of Ayesha, and what the Prophet himself is reported to have said,—the ascent was not in body, but in spirit. But the view of others is altogether different. Thus Ibn Ishac tells us that, according to what Mahomet said, Gabriel awoke him twice; but he went to sleep again:—

And he came to me the third time, and made me stand up and go with him to the gate of the Mosque, where, lo! there was a white steed, in appearance between a pony and an ass. Then with his hand he helped me upon it, neither of us preceding the other. (Then follows a quotation from Cotâda.) The Prophet said: When I tried to mount on Burâc he became refractory; then Gabriel touched his mane and said: Burâc, "knowest thou what thou art doing? for, by the Lord! no servant of the God hath ever mounted thee more blessed from heaven than Mahomet." Whereupon Burâc became so ashamed that sweat poured like water from him. Then he stood still, and I mounted him. After that (Hasan tells us) the Prophet went forward and Gabriel with him, till they reached the Holy temple at Jerusalem, and there found Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, with a company of Prophets,—whom the Prophet led in prayer. Then were brought two vases, in one was wine and in the other milk. So the blessed Prophet took that with milk, and

drank of it, and left the vase of wine alone. Then Gabriel said :—Guide unto temperance, and teach thy people so, O Mahomet, for wine is forbidden unto you. Then the Prophet returned to Mecca ; and in the morning, meeting the Coreish, he told them all that happened. “By the Lord !” said the people, “what a marvellous thing. It takes our caravans a whole month to reach Syria from this, and a whole month to return ; yet Mahomet has gone it all in a single night, and in the same returned !”¹

The following is another account given by the Prophet of his night journey, as heard by Cotâda :—

While I was asleep, lo one came to me, close as the hair is to the skin, and took out my heart. He then brought a golden vase filled with Faith, in which my heart was placed, and my stomach cleansed in the water of Zemzem, so that I was filled with Faith and Wisdom. Thereupon Gabriel mounted me upon Burâc (as in the previous account), and having carried me upwards to the Lowest heaven called out to open the gate. “Who is this ?” one cried.—It is Gabriel. And who is with thee ?—It is Mahomet. Was he summoned ?—O yes ! was Gabriel’s answer.—Then welcome to him ; how good it is that he hath come. And so he opened the gate. Entering, Gabriel said, Here is thy father Adam, make thy salutation to him. So I made to him my salaam, and he returned it to me ; on which he said, Welcome to an excellent son and to an excellent Prophet. Then Gabriel took me up to the Second heaven, and lo there were John (the Baptist) and Jesus.² In the Third heaven there was Joseph ; in the Fourth Idreecs ; in the Fifth Aaron ; and in the Sixth Moses. As he returned the salutation of the Prophet, Moses wept, and on being asked the reason said : “I mourn because more of the people of him that was sent after me do enter Paradise than of mine.” Then we ascended the Seventh heaven ;—This is thy father Abraham, said Gabriel, and salutation was made as before. At the last we

¹ Sfrat Ibn Hishâm.

² At each ascent the same salutation is repeated, but it has been left out here in all but the first.

made the final ascent, where there were beautiful fruits and leaves like the ears of an elephant. This, said Gabriel, is the last heaven ; and lo ! four rivers, two within, and two without. What are these, O Gabriel, I asked ?—Those within, he said, are the rivers of Paradise ; and those seen without, are the Nile and the Euphrates. Then a dwelling-place was prepared for me ; and then they brought me vessels of wine and milk and honey. So I took the milk, and he said, This is food for thee and thy people.¹

Much more of the same kind of Moslem stories, as of Adam wailing, etc., might be given ; but enough and to spare has been quoted for comparison with the Sources which follow, from which it has all been derived.

I. And First as to Mahomet's Mirâj or Ascent to heaven. We begin with a Pehlavi book called *Artû Vîrdf nâmak*, written in the days of Ardashîr, some four hundred years before the Hegira. We are there told that, the Zoroastrian faith fading away, the Magi of Persia sought to revive it in the people's hearts, by sending a Zoroastrian of the above name up to heaven, with the view of bringing down tidings of what was going on there. This messenger ascended from one heaven to another, and having seen it all, was commanded by Ormazd to return to the earth, and tell it to his people. The result is contained in the above-named book, of which we shall briefly quote a few passages, freely translated, to shew how far the Moslem account corresponds with the imaginary details below :—

Our first advance upwards was to the Lower heaven ; . . . and there we saw the Angel of those Holy Ones, giving

¹ *Mishkât al Masâbih.*

forth a flaming light, brilliant and lofty. And I asked Sarosh the holy and Azar the angel :—“What is this place ; and these, who are they ?” . . . We are then told that Artâ ascended similarly to the Second and Third heavens, and to many others beyond.¹

Rising from a gold-covered throne, Bahman the Archangel led me on, till he and I met Ormazd with a company of angels and heavenly leaders, all adorned so brightly that I had never seen the like before. My leader said : This is Ormazd. I sought to salaam to him, and he said he was glad to welcome me from the passing world to that bright and undefiled place. Then he bade Sarosh and the Fire-angel to shew me the blessed place prepared for the holy, and that also for the punishment of the wicked. After which they carried me along till I beheld the Archangels and the other Angels.

At the last, says Artâ, my Guide and the Fire-angel having shewed me Paradise, took me down to Hell ; and from that dark and dreadful place, carried me upward to a beautiful spot where were Ormazd and his company of angels. I desired to salute him, on which he graciously said :—“Artâ Virâf, go thou to the material world ; thou hast seen and now knowest Ormazd, for I am he ; whosoever is true and righteous, him I know.” When Ormazd began thus to speak, I became confused in mind, because I saw a brilliant light but no appearance of a body, and forthwith I perceived the unseen must be Ormazd himself.

There is no doubt a singular resemblance between the ascent of this Magian messenger, and that also told of Mahomet, to the heaven above. In the fabulous Zerdashnâma there is also an account of Zoroaster having ages before ascended to the heavens, after having received permission to visit hell, where he found Ahriman (the devil). It is remarkable that similar tales are not confined to Persia, but extend to India, where they are recorded in the Sanskrit

¹ One of the angels noticed above is said to have led Artâ aloft, just as we are told that Gabriel guided Mahomet upwards.

poems. Thus Arjuna was shewn over the heavens, and there saw Indra's palace, its garden with rivers and fruits, and a tree of which if one eats, he never dies, but lives in delight and enjoys all his heart desires.¹

Many such tales are to be found not only in Zoroastrian books, but also in works of heretical Christian sects, such as "The Testament of Abraham" already noticed. The Apostle is there said to have ascended, at the bidding of one of the Cherubim, to the heavens, and there to have seen all the sights around him. Of Abraham also we have the following account:—

The Archangel Michael having descended to the earth, took Abraham in a Cherub's car, raised him aloft on the cloud, with sixty angels ; and from the same car shewed him the whole world beneath.

This is no doubt the origin of the Burâc (ethereal horse) tradition ;—something like which is to be found in the book of Enoch, where also is notice of the heavenly tree, and the four rivers of Paradise. The Jews hold that the Tree of Life in Eden is so high as to take five hundred years to reach its top,² and tell us numberless other stories of a similar kind.

The Moslems believe that the Garden of Eden was in the heavens above, an idea taken from many of these fictitious writings, specially that called "Visio Pauli." Perhaps also such stories may have been derived from Zoroastrian or Hindoo sources, or these from them ; at any rate they are altogether imaginary. If it be asked whether there is any foundation for

¹ This resembles a tree called by the Arabs Tûba, as well as a marvellous tree of the Zoroastrians, similarly named as if from it flowed sweet water.

² The Targum of Jonathan.

such tales, the answer must be that there is none whatever. They may have arisen from ignorant and imaginative people seeking to amplify what we find in the Bible of the ascent of Enoch and Elias, and also of our Saviour Christ, and also what Paul saw in his sleep, or Peter in his vision at Cæsarea. But any one reading these in our Scriptures will see that to compare them with the wild and fanciful tales of the East would be as sensible as to compare heaven with earth, or the fabulous Shahnameh with the history of the great Nadir. The origin of the Jewish and Christian fancy about the heavenly tree, the four rivers, etc., has evidently been the passage in Genesis about the Garden of Eden,¹ which the wild imagination of these people pictured as if in Heaven, not knowing that the spot lay near to Babylon and Baghdad; and thus they changed the truth of God into a lie, and the divine history into childish, foolish fancies of their own.

II. *What the Coran and Tradition tell us regarding Paradise*, with its Houries and youths, the King of Death, etc. As our Moslem friends know well about all such matters, it is unnecessary to go into any detail about them here. Their origin is to be found altogether in Zoroastrian Sources. Not a syllable is mentioned about them in the Bible, which tells us simply of the rest and peace provided for the true believer on the breast of Abraham, and the blessed place named Paradise in heaven; but not a word have we in the pages of any Jewish Prophet, or New Testament writer, of Houries or Youths of pleasure there. The

¹ Genesis ii. 8-17.

books of the Zoroastrians and Hindoos, however, are full of them ; and these bear the most extraordinary likeness to what we find in the Coran and Tradition. Thus in Paradise we are told of "Houries having fine black eyes," and again of "Houries with large black eyes, resembling pearls hidden in their shells."¹ And just so the Zoroastrians speak of Fairies,—"*Paries*" (*Pairikan*)—spirits in bright array and beautiful, to captivate the heart of man. The name *Houry* too is derived from an Avesta or Pehlavi Source, as well as *Jinn* for Genii, and *Bihisht* (Paradise), signifying in Avestic "the better land."² We have also very similar tales in the old Hindoo writings, of heavenly regions with their boys and girls resembling the Houries and *Ghilmán* of the Coran. The account before given of the Prophet when he beheld Adam rejoicing at the righteous entering Paradise, and weeping at the destruction of the wicked, is also given in "The Testament of Abraham"; but with this difference that it relates to the spirits of the dead, and in the other to the spirits of those not yet born. The latter are called by the Moslems "existent ants or motes";³ and though the term is Arabic, the idea is no doubt Zoroastrian, and may possibly have been taken by them from the Egyptians; but in any case the Arabs must have gained it from Persia.

We have already seen that the "Angel of Death" is

¹ Surahs lv. 72 ; lvi. 22.

² The Author gives an interesting passage on the derivation of the name Houry or *Hdry*, from the Pehlavi word *Hâr*, or Sun, the same as Khur, still used in Persia with a similar meaning. The Arabs not knowing this, trace the word to *hur*, or black-eyed.

³ *Zarrât i Kâindît*: called in the Avesta *Fravashiyo*.

a name that must have been borrowed by the Moslems from the Jews, that being his title in Hebrew. There is, however, this difference, that the Jews name him *Sammâl*, and the Moslems *Azrâel*:¹ neither word is Arabic, but Hebrew. Since, however, the idea nowhere occurs in the Bible, the Jews must have got it elsewhere, and a possible origin we may find in the Avesta, where we are told that if any one falls into the water or fire, his death is not from the fire or water, but it is the Angel of Death that destroys him.

III. *Story of Azâzîl coming forth from hell.*—Moslems take this name from the Jews, who call the evil Spirit by the same name; but the Arabs have received the story from the Zoroastrians. According to Moslem tradition, God created Azâzîl, who in the Seventh hell worshipped the Almighty for a thousand years; he then ascended, spending a similar term at each stage, till he reached the earth. Elsewhere we read that the Devil (*i.e.* Azâzîl) stayed three thousand years close by the gate of Paradise, with hostile intentions against Adam and Eve, of whom he entertained the utmost jealousy.

In a Zoroastrian book² we have the following account of the Devil, by name Ahriman:—

He remained in the abyss, dark and ignorant, there to commit hurt and injury, and such mischief and darkness is the place that they term the dark region. Ormazd, who knew all things, was aware of Ahriman's existence and designs. . . . Both remained thus for 3000 years, without change or action. The evil spirit was ignorant of Ormazd's existence; but eventually rising out of the pit, at last beheld the light of Ormazd. . . . Then, filled with hostility and envy, he set to work to destroy.

¹ *I.e.* Victory of God.

² The *Bûndahishnîh*, capp. I. and II.

There is no doubt some difference between the two accounts : the Moslems holding that Azâzîl worshipped the Almighty, while the Zoroastrians say he knew him not. Still the similarity is obvious, for according to both, he came forth from the pit to destroy God's creation.

Before leaving Azâzîl, there is another tale of which comparison may be made between the Moslems and Zoroastrians, namely, the story of the Peacock. The following is the Moslem tradition :—

Azâzîl kept sitting at the gate of Paradise, anxious to enter. The Peacock also was there seated on a Pinnacle, when he saw one repeating the mighty Names of God. Who art thou ? asked the Peacock. "I am one of the angels of the Almighty";—"But why art thou sitting here ?" "I am looking at Paradise and wish to enter." The Peacock said, "I have no command to let any one enter as long as Adam is there."—"If thou wilt let me in," said the other, "I will teach them a prayer which if any one repeat, three things will be his—he will never grow old ; never be rebellious ; nor will any one ever turn him out of Paradise." Then Iblis (the devil) repeated the prayer. The Peacock also from his pinnacle did the same, and forthwith flew up to the Serpent and told him what he had heard from Iblis. We also learn that when God cast down Adam and Eve with the devil (Iblis) from Paradise, the Peacock also was expelled along with them.¹

The old Persian account of the Peacock differs from the above ; but they too associate him with Ahriman, for Eznik in his book "Against Heresies" writes as follows :—

The Zoroastrians tell us that Ahriman spake as follows :— It is not the case that I am unable to do anything good myself, but that I do not wish it ; and to make this thing certain, I have produced the Peacock.

¹ Qissas al Anbia.

So the Peacock having been the creation of Azâzil, it is quite consistent with the Moslem tradition that he should be his assistant, and with him have been cast down from Paradise.

IV. The Light of Mahomet.—Mahomet is reputed by Tradition to have said:—The first thing created by the Almighty was my Light.¹ Again:—When Adam was created, the Lord having placed that light upon his forehead, said, O Adam, this light which I place upon thy forehead is that of the greatest and best of thy descendants, the light of the Chief of Prophets that shall be sent. This light descended from Adam to Seth, and then in successive generations to Abdallah, and from him to Amina at the time of Mahomet's conception.¹ We are further told by the Traditionists that the Prophet is reputed to have spoken thus:—

The Almighty parted that light into four sections, from which he made the heavens, the pen, Paradise, and believers; each of these four he again divided into four: from the first he formed me, who am the Prophet; from the second he formed reason placed in the Believer's head; from the third modesty within the Believer's eye; and from the fourth love within his heart.²

Let us compare this with the Zoroastrian views:—

In a very ancient book, Ormazd is represented as having created the world and the universe, angels and archangels, and the heavenly intellect, all out of his own light, with the praise of Boundless Time.³

Again, from a still much older work, we quote as follows:—

¹ Rouzat al Ahbâb.

² Qissas al Anbia.

³ The Mînâkhîrad, as old as the Sâsânides.

A grand and royal Halo long attached itself to Jamshîd, Lord of the good flock, while he ruled over the Seven climes—demons, men, fairies, wizards, sorcerers, and evil-doers. . . . Then when he approved of that false and baseless word, the visible halo departed from him in the form of a flying bird. . . . When Jamshîd, Lord of the good flock, no longer saw that halo, he became devoid of joy, and in distress gave himself up to making enmity upon earth. The first time that halo was removed from Jamshîd, it departed from Jam son of Vivaghân (the Sun) in the form of a Varâgh bird, and Mithra seized the halo. When a second time the halo was removed from Jamshîd, it departed as before in the form of a bird ; then Faridân the brave took that halo. . . . When that halo departed the third time from Jamshîd, it was taken by Keresâspa (Garshâsp), that great and powerful man.¹

Now if we bring these two accounts together, and remember that according to the Avesta, Jamshîd was the first man created by God upon earth, and therefore the same as Adam the father of mankind, we see at once that the light which from Jamshîd descended on the best of his posterity agrees with what Tradition speaks of as the Light of Mahomet,—which Moslems appear thus to have borrowed from the Zoroastrians. We also gather that what appears in the Zoroastrian book about Jamshîd ruling over men, genii, giants, etc., is very similar to what the Jews write of Solomon, evidently from the same Source, and taken from them by the Moslems, as indeed has been seen in our Third Chapter. Also what the Moslems write about the division of the Prophet's light, coincides closely with what appears in a Zoroastrian book,² and was evidently taken from that Source.

¹ Yesht xix. 31-37.

² *Dashtir-i Âsmâni*.

V. *The Bridge Sirât.*—Moslems tell us the Prophet held that at the last day after the Judgment, all mankind will pass over this bridge, which is finer than a hair, and sharper than a sword; and that the wicked will fall from it into hell. Now what is the origin of the name Sirât? Though adopted into Arabic, it is of Persian origin, and called by the ancient Zoroastrians *Chinavad*,¹ and its history is also derived from them, as will be seen from the following account taken from one of their ancient writings:—

I flee from much sin and I keep my conduct pure. The keeping pure of the six vital powers,—conduct, speech, thought, intellect, reason, wisdom,—according to thy will, O Author of the power to do good works, with justice do I perform it, that service of thine, in thought, speech, and deed. It is good for me to abide in the Bright way, lest I arrive at the severe punishment of Hell, that I may cross over Chinavad and may reach that blest abode, full of odour, entirely delightful, always bright.²

The meaning of the Persian name is “the connecting link,” the Bridge being that which joins earth with Paradise.

VI. The Moslems say that each Prophet before his death gives notice of the next to follow, as Abraham did of Moses, Moses of David, and so on. Nothing of this sort, however, is in the Bible; on the contrary, the Prophets from first to last gave notice of the coming of the Messiah, and nothing more. As they could not therefore have got this notion from the

¹ It is difficult to explain in English how Chinavad became *Sirât*; but it comes from the varied sound of the letters—*ch* being turned into sharp *s*.

² *Dinkart*, an ancient Zoroastrian book.

Scriptures, from whence then could it have come? There is a work¹ believed by the Zoroastrians to have been written in the language of heaven, and, about the time of Khusrū Parwez, to have been translated in the Dari tongue.² It comprises fifteen books said to have descended upon fifteen Prophets; last of all came the sixteenth, Zoroaster himself. At the end of each book, the name is given of the Prophet that is next to follow. These books no doubt are an ancient forgery, but apparently the Moslem traditionists took their idea of the anticipated coming of each Prophet from them. Again, the second verse in each of these books opens with:—*In the name of God, the Giver of gifts, the Beneficent*; similar to the words at the opening of all the Surahs,³—“In the name of God the Merciful and Gracious.” We also find the first words in another Zoroastrian book⁴ to be very similar, namely, *In the name of Ormazd the Creator*. We have already noticed that the five times of Moslem prayer are the same as five of the seven common to the Zoroastrians and Sabæans, no doubt taken from them.

Many other things might have been added common to the two systems; but it would have swelled our pages beyond reasonable dimensions; and we must be content with what has been given.

VII. Some may hold it difficult to understand how Mahomet could have obtained such stories and

¹ The *Dashtir-i Âsmâni*.

² It has been published both in the original and in the Dari translation.

³ Excepting only the Ninth.

⁴ *Dînpârt*.

matters as we find in the Coran and Tradition from Zoroastrian sources ; and further, how it was possible for the “ unlearned ” Prophet to have become informed of them. But Tradition¹ tells us as follows : “ It was his practice to converse in their own tongue (so we read) with people of every nation who visited him ; and hence the introduction of some Persian words into the Arabic language.” Again, as the Prophet introduced Jewish tales, and also the stories and customs of Arabian heathen, into the Coran, what wonder that he should do so likewise with Persian tales ? Many of these, moreover, were current among the Arabs, as Al Kindy tells us :—“ Suppose we relate to thee such fables as those of Âd, Thamûd and the She-camel, the Companions of the Elephant, and such like, it would only be the way of old women who spend their days and nights in such foolish talk.”

In the *Sîrat al Rasûl*,² we learn that Mahomet had among the Companions a Persian called Salmân, who at the siege of Medina advised him to surround the City with a trench, and when fighting with the Thackîf helped the Moslems with a catapult. Now it is said that some of the Prophet’s opponents spoke of this person as having assisted him in the composition of the Coran, an accusation noticed in Surah xvi. 105, as follows :—*And, verily, we know that they say, Truly a certain man teacheth him ; but the tongue of him unto whom they incline is a Foreign one, while this is the tongue of perspicuous Arabic.* Now if these objectors simply spoke of this Persian helping in the style of the Prophet’s composition, the answer would

¹ *Rouzat al Ahbâb.* ² *Sîrat al Rasûl*, by Ibn Hisham and Ibn Ishaq.

have been sufficient. But when we find that much of the Coran and Tradition has the closest resemblance to the contents of Zoroastrian books, the answer is of no value whatever. On the contrary, the above verse shews, by the admission of the Prophet himself, that he was assisted by this Persian Salmân. Hence even from this story it is clear that the Zoroastrian writings formed one of the Sources of Islam.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HANEFITES: THEIR INFLUENCE ON MAHOMET AND ON HIS TEACHING.

BEFORE the time of Mahomet, there were a few inquirers from amongst the Arabs who had a strong aversion from idolatry, and who accordingly sought to find relief in a better faith. Amongst the Jews, and possibly from ancient tradition still surviving, it was known in Arabia that Abraham was a worshipper of the One true God. Hence both at Mecca and Medina, and also at Tayif, we find that there were men who, seeking after the truth, had abandoned the worship of idols; and these were called Hanefites. The names of

six of these are given in the margin,
Abu Ameer . Medina.
Ommeya . . . Tayif.
Waraca
Obeidallah } . . Mecca.
Othman
Zeid

some having also followers of their own. Now we hold that these inquirers, and especially Zeid ibn Amr, had a very marked effect, by their conceptions, conversation, and ex-

ample, upon the Prophet, as we find from the contents of the Coran. Of all the authorities on the subject, that of Ibn Ishac and Ibn Hisham as contained in the *Sîrat*,¹ is by far the oldest, and being nearest the Hegira,

¹ *Sîrat al Rasûl*, or Life of the Prophet.
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the most reliable that we have. The details of this work were learned from Zohry (*d. A.H. 124*), who knew a succession of the Companions, and in especial Orva, a relation of Ayesha. Zohry's book no longer exists, but much has been preserved in that of his pupil, Ibn Ishac (*d. A.H. 151*), from which we have quotations in the *Sirat* of Ibn Hisham (*d. A.H. 213*). No doubt in these writings there is a vast amount of the fanciful and exaggerated; but much also is valuable as giving men's impressions, and memory of facts, as they existed at the time. We take, therefore, from the *Sirat* the following account of the Hanefites:—

The Coreish were once gathered together during their Eed beside one of their idols, slaying sacrifices, praying, and making circuits around it, as they used to do at this festival every year. Just then four friends stood apart, and spoke secretly to one another in righteous terms. These were Waraca, Obeidallah grandson of Abdal Mutalib, Othman and Zeid ibn Amr. They said:—By the Lord! our people have nothing left of the faith of Abraham. What is this stone that we should encircle it? It can neither hear nor speak, neither hurt nor help. O our people! look out for your souls, for by the Lord ye are altogether wanting. Then they separated, and departed into various lands to find out the true faith of Abraham. *Waraca* embraced the Christian religion, and studying the books of its people, became fixed in their faith. *Obeidallah* remained in his doubts, but at last embraced Islam; then with a party of the Moslems he emigrated to Abyssinia along with his wife Omm Habibah, daughter of Abu Sofian and also a believer. There, however, he afterwards became a Christian, and perished. When he was converted to Christianity, he said to his companions:—"We see, but ye are only blinking"—that is, cannot see plainly, like a whelp trying to open its eyes. The Prophet himself married his widow, Omm Habibah, sending over a follower for that purpose to the *Najâshy*, who himself concluded the marriage

ceremonial—the dower being 400 dinars, which formed a precedent for time to come. Now as to *Othman*, he repaired to the Court of the Emperor of Byzantium, where he obtained high rank and embraced the Christian faith. . . .

Last of all we come to *Zeid*, who stood fast, joining neither the Jewish nor the Christian religion. He broke off from his own people's faith, and gave up idols, the eating of carrion, blood, the slaughter of animals for the gods, and the putting of daughters to death. He said :—I worship the God of Abraham ; but he blamed his people for having chosen evil ways. There is a tradition from Amina daughter of Abu Bekr that she once saw *Zeid*, then very aged, leaning with his back on the Kaaba, and thus addressing the people :—O Coreish ! by Him in whose hand is the life of *Zeid ibn Amr* I swear, that not one of you professeth the faith of Abraham, but me alone. Then he prayed :—O Lord ! if I but knew what way was most pleasing unto thee, I would worship thee in that manner ; but I know it not. Then putting the palms of his hands to the ground, he bent his body down in worship. We are also told that Mahomet being asked by his relations to pray that *Zeid* might be forgiven, consented,—“for he shall be raised up alone, like a community.”¹ *Zeid* wrote the following lines regarding his parting with his people's faith, and what happened to him therefrom—

Am I to worship one or a thousand I have altogether forsaken Lât Hence I neither worship Ozza nor her Neither do I worship Ghanam,	Are Divine affairs divided thus ? Thus should every brave and thoughtful man. Nor the two idols of the Beni Amr, nor do pilgrimage unto them.
I was astonished, and had strange thoughts in the night seasons. Since the Lord destroyeth multitudes And many others he preserveth for	Though I did regard him my Lord, when I had little understanding. And in the day-time the seeing will understand. Because their works are evil ; And cherisheth the little ones.

¹ Ibn Ishac tells us that Mahomet, while believing himself forbidden to pray for his own mother, yet when asked by a female relative of *Zeid* whether she might pray for him, said : “Yes, for he will be raised as a separate religious community at the last day.”

Amongst us, one day man will And the next, he will be as the branch
 stumble ; fed by the rain.
 But I now worship my Lord Most That the Compassionate Lord may
 Merciful ; pardon my sin.
 Therefore observe the fear of the So long as ye do so, ye shall not
 Lord your God ; perish ;
 Thou shalt see the home of the pure But for the unbelievers, flaming hell-
 in the Gardens ; fire ;
 During this life disgrace, And after death that which shall
 bitterly cramp their breasts.

We further learn from Ibn Hisham that Zeid was expelled from Mecca; and being forbidden to remain there, had to live on Mount Hirâ, opposite the city. The Prophet himself in the summer-time used every year to retire, as the Arabs used to do, into a cave in the Sacred Mount for solitary meditation; and so we believe that he must often have met his relative Zeid there. For he used still to go after his call to be a Prophet, as we learn from Ibn Ishac:—"Gabriel by the mercy of the Lord came to him at Hirâ in Ramazan . . . This he did every year, according to the custom of the Coreish in the days of ignorance, to be alone and refresh their souls." Now everyone acquainted with the Coran and Tradition cannot but perceive how alike is the teaching of both, and that they must have had the greatest influence on each other, in their views about such things for instance as idol-worship, the burying alive of infant girls, the Unity of God, Paradise and Hell, and calling God "the Lord most Merciful and Compassionate." Again, Zeid and the Hanefites, like the Prophet, followed Abraham, calling him by the same name (Hanif) as their own,—in illustration of which we may quote Surah iv. 126:—*Who is of better religion than he who resigneth himself unto God, and followeth the faith of Abraham the Orthodox (Hanif).*

. . . And again, Surah iii. 89 :—*Say, The Lord hath said truly, "Follow the faith of Abraham the Orthodox (Hanif), for he was not one of the idolaters."* And again, Surah vi. 162 :—*Verily the Lord hath guided me into the right way, the true faith, the religion of Abraham the Orthodox (Hanif).* And thus we see the Prophet calls himself and his people by the name Hanif. The word, indeed, originally signified “unclean” or “apostate,” and was so used by the idolatrous Arabs of Zeid, because he abandoned the worship of their gods. The name pleased the Prophet and was used by him in a good sense. We must not forget, however, that all the four Hanefites were themselves, as already said, nearly related to the Prophet,—Obeidallah being nephew to Mahomet who took his widow Omm Habibah to wife; while Waraca and Othman were sons of two aunts of Khadija. Hence the views, sayings, and teaching of these Hanefites cannot but have had a decided influence on the Prophet. We may also remember that though the Prophet is believed to have said that he had no right even to pray for the salvation of his own mother, yet he did so for Zeid and his blessedness hereafter. From all this we see that the Prophet recognised his principles, and attested them as right.

But now some of our objectors may say, Suppose we accept as true all that you have told us of the various Sources from which Islam is derived, then it would prove that Mahomet himself had personally no influence on the Faith ;—a thing hard to believe. Certainly, we reply, it is impossible to imagine that as Mahomet himself was the Author of the Faith, his

own purpose and mind had no effect in the structure; just as in a building the use of stones, etc., in its erection, does not detract from the skill and ability of the architect, without whom they would be of no possible use. And in like manner, as the edifice of Islam has its own established character, and differs from all other religions, it is clear that it is the work of one possessed of the highest gifts and power; and, from the beauty of the composition of the Coran we see that he was singularly wise and eloquent. Moreover, from his life as given in Tradition, and the history of his time, the personality of the Prophet is manifest in the Coran. Thus before his flight to Medina, being a mere ordinary citizen of Mecca, he made no mention in the passages given forth there, of force or war for the extension of the faith.

But, FIRST, after the Hegira, when he had gained the powerful body of the Ansârs for his followers, he gave them leave to defend themselves and beat off their opponents. Thus in Surah xxii. 40:—*Permit-
sion is given to them to fight, because they are
persecuted . . . those who have been turned out of
their houses without just cause other than that they
say, Our Lord is God;* and it is allowed by the Commentaries, that this was the first revelation giving permission to fight.

SECOND, some time after, when Mahomet had gained victories over his enemies, this simple permission was changed into command, as we find in Surah ii. 212, 214:—*War is enjoined you, but it is hateful unto
you. . . . They will ask thee concerning the Sacred
Month, whether they may war therein. Say,—To war*

therein is grievous, but to obstruct the way of God, and infidelity towards him and the holy Masjid, and to drive out his people from thence, is more grievous in the sight of God ; and temptation (to idolatry) is more grievous than to kill. The instruction in this passage being that the Moslems should war against the Coreish even in the Sacred months, because they prevented them from visiting the Kaaba.

THIRD, when in the sixth year of the Hegira, the Prophet had conquered the Beni Coreitza and other tribes, he issued still sterner commands against his adversaries, as we find in Surah v. 37 :—*The recompense of those who fight against God and his Apostle, and study to act corruptly on the earth, is that they shall be slain or crucified, or have their hands and their feet cut off on the opposite sides (of the body), or be banished from the land. Such shall be their disgrace in this world, and in the next they shall suffer a grievous punishment.* The Commentators hold that this terrible command relates to idolaters only, and not to Jews and Christians.

FOURTH. But towards these also, the attitude of the Prophet towards the end of his life entirely changed ; and so we read in the last revealed Surah (ix. 5, 29) that after the four Sacred months had passed, they should again commence war, as follows :—
And when the Sacred months are ended, kill the idolaters wheresoever ye find them, take them prisoners and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place. But if they repent, and offer up the appointed Prayers, and pay the legal Alms, then dismiss them freely, for God is gracious and merciful. . . .

Fight against those who believe not in God, nor in the last day, nor forbid that which God and his Apostle have forbidden, and profess not the true religion, namely, of those to whom the Scriptures have been given, until they pay tribute by the hand, and be reduced low.

And so we learn from these successive passages in the Coran, that the great and unchanging Almighty God, step by step, allowed his Divine Law to be altered as the Prophet and his followers gradually gained successive victories by the sword. Not only so, but we see the same liberty of change permitted in respect of certain passages in the Coran to be cancelled by other passages; thus in Surah ii. 100—
We abrogate no verse, or cause it to be left out, but we bring in its place a better, or one like unto it. Ah! dost thou not know that God is over all things almighty?

Hence so long as Mahomet entertained the hope of bringing together both Jews and Christians, and also the Arab tribes, by the retention of some of their national practices, there seemed to him the possibility of uniting all Arabia in one Grand religion. But when he found this to be impracticable, then it remained for him either to abandon and eventually destroy the two former, or else lose the native Arabs as a whole. The objects and the mind of the Prophet are manifest throughout his prophetic life. Thus, to take an instance, the marriage with Zeinab wife of his adopted son Zeid, as justified in the Coran,¹ shews how much

¹ Surah xxxiii. 37.

the Revelation and whole system of the day was permeated by the objects of his hourly life and personal surroundings; which indeed is manifest in a multitude of other matters in the Coran itself and in Tradition. And certainly, when we look at the variety of teaching and of interests embodied in these, we gain a wide and extensive survey of the thousand rills which run along to form the vast Moslem river;—Sources they all are of Islam, but every one affected by the intellect, the nature, and the personal aims and objects, of the Prophet himself.

We readily admit the many precious truths and lessons taught in the Coran, above all the Unity of Almighty God; and, among such stories as those about the Table, Paradise, the tree Tûbâ, etc., we often find good and valuable teaching. But anyone who has drunk of the pure and sparkling stream, will turn from all others, especially if turbid anywhere, and seek refreshment in the Water of Life, so often borne testimony to in the Coran itself; and what is that blessed Fountain but the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, to which Mahomet in the following passages himself bears such remarkable testimony: *Verily we have sent down the Tourat, in which are Direction and Light.* . . . *And we caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming that which was in his hands of the Tourat, and we gave him the Gospel in which is Guidance and Light and Attestation of that which was revealed before it of the Tourat, and a Direction and Admonition to the pious.*¹

¹ Surah v. 48, 50.

THE SAVIOUR PROMISED BY ABRAHAM 101

Whosoever, then, desires to know what was the faith of Father Abraham, the Friend of God, let him diligently read the Tourât of Moses, so strongly borne testimony to in the above verses of the Coran; and there he will find the blessed promise given him by the Almighty, that the one Divine Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was to come of the descendants of Abraham and of his son Isaac. The Patriarch accepted the promise, and believed in the coming Messiah, as we see in a passage of the Tourât, where God spoke thus to Abraham:—*And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.*¹ The same promise is repeated again in the Book of Genesis to Abraham:—*And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.*² And Jesus himself refers to this promise when he said to the Jews:—*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad.*³ The Apostle Paul also makes mention of the same expectation:—*To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of One, And to thy seed, which is Christ;* and again:—*If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.*⁴

May the gracious and compassionate Lord, who hath in his infinite mercy fulfilled this his eternal covenant, grant that the humble Writer and the Kind

¹ Genesis xvii. 19.

² John viii. 56.

³ Genesis xxii. 18.

⁴ Galatians iii. 16 and 29.

Reader of these pages, may, along with the blessed Patriarch, be made partakers of the heavenly inheritance thus promised through our Saviour Jesus Christ. And to his name be glory.

Amen, so let it be!

